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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes the Participation and Equity Program's two objectives of reducing significantly the number of Australian students prematurely leaving full-time education and of fostering more equal education, and discusses strategies for achieving these objectives. Following a statement by the Minister of Education and Youth Affairs and an introduction, chapters are devoted to the following: state and commonwealth initiatives, selected statistics on participation and retention and participation and equity, basic principles and objectives of the Participation and Equity Program, proposed areas for action, operation of the program, administrative arrangements, and recommendations. A directory of School Commission offices in each state capital concludes the report. (Author/DCS)

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COMMONWEALTH SCHOOLS COMMISSION

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Participation and Equity in Australian Schools

The Goal of Full Secondary Educati

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Participation and Equity in Australian Schools

The Goal of Full Secondary Education

Canberra
March 1984

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Foreword

The establishment of the Participation and Equity Program was announced in the Funding Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions for 1984 issued by the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs in July 1983. The report ***Participation and Equity in Australian Schools*** was prepared by the Commonwealth Schools Commission. It recommended to the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs the general principles and directions of development for the schools sector of the Program.

The Commission's report contains an analysis of the twin objectives of reducing significantly the numbers of students leaving full-time education prematurely and of fostering more equal educational outcomes; it also includes a general discussion of strategies that might enable these objectives to be achieved.

In reprinting the report, the Commission has taken the opportunity to incorporate the text of the statement made by the Minister when she tabled the report in Parliament in December 1983.

The Curriculum Development Centre has been responsible for producing this expanded version of the report. Changes to the secondary curriculum will be an essential element of the Program. Many schools in all States are expanding and diversifying the curriculum to include a wider range of learning experiences and to undertake educational programs with changed emphasis so that all students are encouraged to remain at school longer in a more relevant school environment.

It is hoped that the Participation and Equity Program will encourage a wider range of subject choice and provide other educational opportunities and incentives for the many young people for whom the present approach to upper secondary education has little appeal or relevance.

During 1984 the Curriculum Development Centre will be directing attention to supporting the States and non-government schools in pursuing major reform and renewal of the curriculum, particularly as it relates to the educational needs of those students and schools who are the prime targets of the Participation and Equity Program.

Joint State and Commonwealth Participation and Equity Program Committees are presently being established by State and non-government authorities to plan the implementation of the Program and make recommendations on priorities, but details of their membership have not yet been finalised. In the meantime, contact with the Program may be established through the offices of the Schools Commission in each State capital. Their addresses and telephone numbers are given in the Directory at the end of this report.

P.D. Tannock
Chairman

Table of Contents

Tabling Statement vii

Introduction 1

1. State and Commonwealth Initiatives 3

2. Participation and Retention: Selected Statistics 6

3. Participation and Equity 12

4. Basic Principles and Objectives of the Participation and Equity Program 18

5. Proposed Areas for Action 21

6. Operation of the Program 26

7. Administrative Arrangements 30

8. Recommendations 31

9. Directory 33

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9 NOV 1983

Senator the Hon. Susan Ryan
Minister for Education
and Youth Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Ryan

On 28 July 1983 you issued Guidelines to the Commonwealth Schools Commission for the year 1984. You asked the Commission to provide you with advice in relation to the Participation and Equity Program outlining proposed general principles and directions of development in 1984.

In accordance with that request, the Commission has pleasure in forwarding this report.

Yours sincerely

P.D. Tannock (Chairman)
R.J. Andrews
J.S. Brown
D.B. Clarke
L.G. Connors
N.G. Curry
V.J. Davy
J.V. Faulkner
W.L. Hamilton
P. Hughes
M.D. Miland
M. Norst
I. Hossack (Secretary)

Tabling Statement

Senator the Hon. Susan Ryan 14 December 1983

I wish to draw the attention of Honourable Senators to two significant reports concerned with the development of the Participation and Equity Program. These are the Commonwealth Schools Commission's report ***Participation and Equity in Australian Schools*** and the report of TAFE Council of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission ***Recommendations for 1984 — Suplementary Report on Participation and Equity Program***.

Preparation of these papers was required in the Funding Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions which I issued on 28 July 1983. I indicated then the Government's wish to receive papers from the Commissions outlining proposed general principles and directions of development for the Program in 1984.

For 1984 the Government has allocated $74 million ($71.6 million in estimated December 1982 prices) for the Participation and Equity Program (PEP). The new program subsumes the School to Work Transition Program under which $49.4 million was allocated in 1983 ($48.6 million in estimated December 1982 prices).

The Government sees the PEP as the centre piece of the overall framework of youth policies which it is developing. The Schools Commission and the TAFE Council will administer the program with the Department of Education and Youth Affairs exercising a strong co-ordinating role to ensure that education, training, income support and employment policies are harmonised to the maximum possible extent. The approach has been endorsed by the Australian Education Council and by the historic first Youth Ministers Meeting held in November this year.

The program will work towards the important national goal of all young Australians completing a full secondary education or other appropriate education or training. Participation of our young people in education and training lags significantly behind a number of comparable countries. It is the general standard of education of Australians which will sustain national progress. Policies which resulted in only about 30 per cent of our youth completing secondary education, compared with 90 per cent in many other OECD countries, must be changed. In addition the Government is concerned about the unacceptably high level of youth unemployment — currently 22 per cent for 15-19 year olds.

The Participation and Equity Program places strong emphasis on equity. It will seek to develop education systems under which the less advantaged groups in the community can receive a fair share of the range of benefits education brings. The position of women and girls and other under-represented groups such as Aboriginals and some ethnic groups will be given particular attention under PEP.

The Government hopes that PEP will provide a focus for involving people in creating a constructive consensus about education. Employers and unions, parents and the community generally have an important part to play in developing and supporting constructive policies for education and training provision in our schools and TAFE Colleges.

The Government expects that non-institutional initiatives will be taken under the program, particularly for the benefit of young people who would otherwise be unlikely to participate in education or training.

PEP represents an important stage in the developing co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth in respect of schooling and TAFE. Ten years ago, in more abundant times, the Labor Government began its program of substantial support for education from which all schools and TAFE institutions benefited and in which the real needs of schools serving disadvantaged communities were first addressed. Now we must resume that important work.

The success of PEP will depend to a very large extent on the work of the large State education systems which, historically, developed because of a concern for equity — the need to deliver services to children in vastly differing geographical and social circumstances. The conditions of the 1980s present new challenges to these systems and also to the non-government school systems. The Commonwealth is confident that the partnership between the States and the Commonwealth will enable productive efforts to meet these challenges.

The Commonwealth Government has had to exercise restraint in many important areas of public spending because of the difficult economic circumstances which it inherited. The increase in funds which it has committed over the next three years to PEP and in other areas of education training and support for young people shows our commitment to young people and a recognition of

their significance in national recovery and reconstruction.

The reports now presented by the two Commissions are important in the sequence of development of PEP. Since the Commonwealth's intentions were announced in general terms in July, the Commissions have consulted with State and non-government authorities about the program's development. Arrangements to ensure the orderly continuation of Transition Program activities consistent with the new program have been put into place. State and non-government authorities are currently developing their 1984 programs and some of these have been submitted to the Commonwealth.

The Commission's report will be of particular significance for allocation of the additional funds to be made available in 1984. During that year significant progress will be made towards changes in schools enabling them to give all students and especially those from a disadvantaged background a rewarding and useful education. In TAFE new courses and activities will expand the possibilities for youth, particularly those currently unemployed.

The Government expects that the needs of the severely disadvantaged will be given increased prominence in the provision of services.

Commonwealth Schools Commission Report

The Commonwealth Schools Commission's Report makes recommendations on the program covering its developmental nature during 1984, the targetting of effort appropriately amongst schools, and the allocation of funds between school-level and system level activities. I now outline the Government's response to these recommendations.

The Commission recommends that 1984 should be a developmental year for schools during which the foundations are laid for the long term effort required for the achievement of the Program's goals. While it is essential for the Program to be phased in this way, I am concerned that positive and concrete steps are taken in 1984 to address the many issues confronting secondary education which the Schools Commission has outlined in its agenda for action. This agenda focusses on the following areas of major importance:

- curriculum
- assessment, accreditation and credentialling
- teacher/student/parent interaction
- teacher renewal and support
- school structure and organisation
- post-school links (especially with TAFE)
- groups with special needs
- public support for education

Underpinning the Commission's recommendations is the principle of co-operation at all levels — among students, parents and teachers within the school, between school and community, among schools within a locality or region, between State and Commonwealth. The Program will build upon existing Commonwealth and State programs and activities in secondary education. The extra resources being made available for the Participtpion and Equity Program will provide the means of giving these initiatives and the co-operative principles I have referred to a significant impetus.

I welcome the detailed examination and investigation of the educational implications of the two elements of the new Program, participation and equity, undertaken in the Schools Commission's paper. Its discussion of questions associated with the inequitable educational provisions for a number of important groups of young people in our society — Aborigines, those from working class backgrounds, migrants, girls — provides an important basis for specific recommendations on program administration.

As a result of its analysis of the Program's two key concepts and to ensure that the funding provided will have the maximum possible impact, the Commission has recommended that a limited group of secondary schools be given priority for funding in 1984. The target group should total about 40 per cent of government and non-government schools in each State or system. Inclusion is to be determined on the basis of socio-economic, retention and participation data. I endorse the Commission's approach on this, but have also asked it to develop ways for all secondary schools progressively to become involved in and to benefit from the Program.

The Commission has stressed the importance of change and development taking place in individual schools or groups of co-operating schools, and has recommended that the majority of funds for 1984 be devoted to school based projects and activities. The balance of funds will be available for systems to develop support services, to disseminate information and foster understanding, and to promote research and development activities.

I believe this emphasis on individual schools is most important if effective reform is to occur, and I have therefore accepted the Commission's proposals. It will be most important that this approach is administered flexibly and that the Schools Commission provides opportunities for consultation with State and non-goverment authorities about its application in their individual circumstances. The Commission's Program Guidelines to be issued in January 1984 will set out ways in which these arrangements can be introduced.

The Government regards this as a most important Commonwealth initiative, and the Common-

wealth will be closely involved, not only through its membership of State Committees, but also in the development of national perspectives for the schools program. The Commonwealth Schools Commission will establish a committee to advise it on aspects of the implementation and development of the program, to assist with consultations, and advise on Projects of National Significance.

State Committees

In the July 1983 funding guidelines to the Education Commissions I referred to the Government's intention that joint Commonwealth-State Committees should operate in each State to plan the implementation of the Program.

After consideration of the Schools Commission's proposal on the structure of these Committees, the Government has concluded that State Committees should be established with the following membership, to plan the implementation of the government schools and TAFE programs:

Chairperson (State)	1
Government Schools	1
Technical and Further Education	1
Equal Opportunities	1
Parents	1
Teachers	2
Students or Youth Organisations	2
State Labour Department	1
Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations	1
Commonwealth Schools Commission	1
Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission	1
Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs	1
TOTAL	14

The Commonwealth accepts the need for some flexibility in the Committee structure to meet the particular circumstances of States and Territories and I would be prepared to consider limited modification to the above structure at the request of State Ministers.

I hope that State Ministers will be able to ensure that a reasonable balance in male and female membership can be achieved through official as well as non-official appointments.

I would also hope that in their operations the State Committees would consult with groups representing Aboriginals, ethnic communities and the handicapped.

Non-government committees should be constituted along broadly similar lines with representatives from both Catholic and other schools in the place of the State authorities.

Conclusion

I emphasise that the Government sees the Participation and Equity Program as of key importance in stimulating the changes needed in education to meet the aspirations and needs of our young people. The reports of the Education Commissions provide a basis for planning and developing of appropriate action to proceed. I look forward to fruitful co-operation between the Commonwealth, the States and non-government school authorities, with the active participation of parents, teachers, young people themselves and the community, in the implementation of this important program.

Introduction

1 On 28 July 1983, the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Senator the Honourable Susan Ryan, issued the Government's policy and program guidelines, ***Participation and Equity; Funding Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions for 1984.*** These Guidelines contained a statement of the broad objectives and dimensions of a new Commonwealth program for schools: the Participation and Equity Program. The Guidelines stated:

> 'The program will make funds available to the States and non-government schools to stimulate broadly based changes in secondary education including:
>
> - catering at all stages more adequately for the needs of the full range of students;
> - making changes to secondary schools organisation to accommodate more adequately the social, economic and cultural diversity of students, and to promote self-confidence, independence and a sense of autonomy in all students;
> - reforming and diversifying the curriculum;
> - reviewing credentialling and assessment arrangements, including provision for accreditation of work experience;
> - changing and developing teacher attitudes and skills;
> - improving the relationship between schools and the community, and community attitudes to education.'

2 The Funding Guidelines set out the twin objectives of reducing significantly the numbers of students leaving full-time education prematurely; and of fostering equal educational outcomes. In order to achieve these objectives Program funds will be available to systems for stimulating broadly-based changes to increase the value of schooling for all students. Funding is to be provided for assistance to particular schools to increase participation by groups now under-represented in the final years of secondary schooling and in the full range of post-school educational and employment options.

3 The Schools Commission welcomes the Participation and Equity Program as a significant and tangible recognition of the equal right of all young Australians to be included in the education and training provided for their age group; and of the central importance of education and training to the social, economic and political well-being of our nation. This paper sets out what the Commission sees as necessary steps for 1984 and beyond to lay the foundation for a policy of full participation.

4 The Commission has argued consistently that efforts should be made to provide better opportunities for all children to participate fully in schooling; that secondary schooling should provide students with a sound and broad preparation for participation in adult society and that schooling should be enjoyable and satisfying in its own right. In its ***Report for the 1979-81 Triennium*** the Commission drew attention to the growing demand in Australia for education beyond the compulsory years. Adaptation of secondary schools to changed educational, social and economic circumstances was also identified as a major educational issue.

5 In ***Schooling for 15 & 16 Year Olds*** (1980) the Commission canvassed the issue of equity in secondary education.

> 'Those who leave at the completion of their compulsory schooling have in common with their age group immaturity and minimal personal resources to cope with the myriad challenges of the world. They do not, however, represent a cross-section of that age group. Too high a proportion comes from particular socio-economic groups and groups with identifiable personal characteristics. Failure to gain from schools is not a random occurrence. The distribution of educational opportunities by the social origins and personal traits of students is a persistent feature of the Australian system. It poses a challenge to distribute the benefits of schooling more evenly across the whole age group. Can there be benefits which do not depend upon the differences in value, tastes and preferences that students bring with them as a consequence of their diverse social origins? Can schools make adequate provision for migrants, Aborigines, girls and socio-economically disadvantaged students? Though beginning efforts have been made through the Schools Commission and other programs to provide for the needs of these special populations within our schools, the resources and efforts as yet applied are limited and insufficient to significantly affect the life chances of the individuals involved.'

6 The Commission's ***Recommendations for 1984*** emphasised that the reform and development of secondary education in Australia is a complex, long-term and expensive task. The report recommended that attention be focussed on the following areas:

> '(i) The nature and structure of secondary education institutions, including the possibility of development of new types of schools and different sorts of relationships among them from those which currently exist.

(ii) Incentives and disincentives in the current financial support systems for secondary students and their families.

(iii) The appropriateness or otherwise of the present systems for selection, training, appointment, deployment, promotion and professional development of teachers, principals and counsellors in secondary education.

(iv) The adequacy of the present curriculum, the values that are attached to its components, and the options for national curriculum development and/or co-ordination.

(v) The relationship between higher education requirements and secondary school curricula and assessment systems, and the adequacy of present mechanisms for measuring the standards and outcomes of schooling.

(vi) The funding mechanisms for education and the extent to which they support or frustrate the objectives of secondary education.

(vii) The extent to which primary schools provide adequate grounding in basic skills and attitudes upon which secondary education can be built.

(viii) The means which are available or which might be adopted for parent education and counselling in relation to the educational needs and possibilities for their children, and the responsibilities of the home to the school.'

7 The Commission considers it essential that direct assistance be provided in the first years of the Program to schools serving areas where students are not gaining the benefits of full participation in education because of the combined effects of cultural and social background and economic factors. It is also essential that general issues in secondary education, affecting all students, be taken up from the outset.

8 In this paper the Commission has recommended how these related objectives should be pursued for 1984. During this time, the Transition from School to Work Program will be fully subsumed within the new Program. In the light of the funding then available, it will be necessary to consider the emphasis to be given to these objectives for 1985 and beyond.

9 The need to strengthen and further develop secondary education has been recognised by education systems throughout Australia. The Participation and Equity Program will help them to collaborate with each other and with the Commonwealth in addressing educational issues which have become matters of national priority and urgency. These issues have emerged not only in Australia but in other comparable countries.

10 Higher participation rates are desirable in themselves for educational reasons, and are increasingly relevant economically and socially. Rapidly changing technologies and related effects on the domestic economy make early school leaving and the consequent entry to the labour market of a large number of young, unskilled school leavers increasingly inappropriate in economic terms. The harmful social consequences arising from long-term unemployment among young people are widely recognised. What is needed is an improvement in overall educational performance; an increase in the level of participation in education; and more equitable outcomes.

11 A sustained national effort will be needed for this decade at least. Not only will continued special purpose funding through the Participation and Equity Program be required, but substantial increases will be needed in general funding, recurrent and capital, to provide for the increased numbers in education and training institutions. The scale of these increases is illustrated by the fact that if all pupils in the final year of primary school in 1982 were to proceed to the final two years of secondary education, an additional 130,000 enrolments over current Year 11 levels would result.

12 Schooling is a continuous process and the foundations for successful participation in secondary education and beyond are laid in the primary years. In addition, increased participation in secondary schooling requires a corresponding expansion in access to tertiary education. This will be necessary to accommodate a greater number of young people completing schooling in preparation for further education, including an expanded number from those groups now under-represented generally or in particular areas of higher education and training.

13 Improvements in secondary education should not be at the expense of any other educational sector, and, in particular, infants and primary education. Both Commonwealth and State Governments will need to give commitments to increased recurrent funding levels and the other support required. Greater public understanding of the issues involved and support for the Program's priorities and directions are also essential.

CHAPTER 1

State and Commonwealth Initiatives

1.1 The new Participation and Equity Program will build upon activities and initiatives already being undertaken in schools and systems around Australia and through existing Commonwealth programs. It will extend the scope for collaborative action to achieve the national educational objectives shared by the States and the Commonwealth. It will also provide the developmental support which will enable new ideas and programs to be implemented.

State Initiatives

1.2 Important State activity has occurred in recent years in the area of curriculum; in student assessment and credentialling; in structural and organisation change in schools and courses; and in developing co-operative arrangements between schools and the technical and further education (TAFE) sectors. These areas have been identified as major program elements within the Participation and Equity Program. The following outline indicates likely areas of continued activity and progress under the new Program.

Curriculum Change

1.3 Authorities in most States are making significant progress in diversifying the curriculum for the senior secondary years. A wide variety of study options and modes of study has been developed in one State to encourage more students to complete a full secondary education. The introduction of term or semester length course units in several senior secondary programs, and the increased flexibility of study sequences and arrangements for tertiary entrance have helped to bring about richer and more varied programs for senior secondary students. In many instances these courses have been devised by individual schools. The increased support for non-accredited courses in a number of systems, while having limited direct impact on the constraints imposed by final assessment and tertiary admissions requirements, has given many schools a capacity to broaden the range of offerings and to respond sensitively and quickly to emerging areas of need or interest, such as computing and community languages. The successes of recently developed courses for Years 11 and 12 students in some States may well lead to curriculum change on a larger scale. These initiatives reveal the high level of concern and activity by systems in the field of curriculum and also provide models and strategies that can be developed under the Participation and Equity Program. Further, the experience of schools and systems in initiating these changes indicates the need for close liaison between school systems and the general community to establish the value of new courses and to develop community appreciation of broader objectives of secondary education than might have been appropriate when the later years of secondary education served a narrow section of the age group.

Assessment and Credentialling

1.4 Assessment and credentialling present major problems for all systems and authorities. In a number, action has been, or is being taken to introduce new agencies and procedures for student assessment at the end of secondary education. The objectives of these developments are to widen subject options open to students and to increase the recognition and status for courses assessed at the school level. Internal procedures for all or part of the students' final assessment are now used in a number of systems. Various procedures for moderating school based assessment (including the use of the Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test in several systems) have been trialled, revised and, in some cases, established on a permanent basis. Experimental schemes of admission to tertiary institutions on the basis of a school or principal's report have been instituted in several systems. In those States where inquiries into aspects of secondary education are in progress, assessment and accreditation are major topics of investigation. Clearly, there is much current activity in this field which Participation and Equity Program initiatives can support; it was equally clear during the Commission's consultations with the States that, despite this activity, assessment and credentialling remain a major difficulty for most systems. Several authorities proposed co-ordinated national action in an effort to address these problems effectively.

Structural and Organisational Change

1.5 A recent discussion paper in one system canvasses the possibility of changes to the structure and arrangement of the entire secondary phase of education. The options for alternatives to the existing six year (7-12) pattern put forward for public discussion and response were:

- semester organisation in all or some years and/or courses

- 4 years + 2 years
- 3 x 2 year modules
- 3 years + 3 years
- vertical classes in all or some courses

Similar developments, especially with respect to the length of course units, are under consideration elsewhere. Some systems are also looking more closely at structural change as a means of enabling them to provide more effectively for senior secondary students, possibly through sub-schools or separate senior or secondary colleges. The challenge is to develop structures that will provide for the educational needs of the 12 to 18 years age group.

Co-operation with TAFE

1.6 Closer relationships and more co-operative arrangements are developing between the school and TAFE sectors, to provide a wider range of educational opportunities for senior students. LINK courses have been especially important in this development. Catholic authorities in several States have established close links with TAFE. Clusters of schools with TAFE institutions as an integral part of the education network are emerging in a number of systems. More flexible assessment and credentialling arrangements enhance the capacity of TAFE to provide for young students wishing to return to formal education either to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills or to complete secondary education. This development could have major significance for young Aboriginal people for whom conventional secondary schooling often proves inappropriate. It has also drawn the schools and TAFE sectors closer in program planning and discussion of resource allocation. Yet substantial barriers remain, especially to program co-ordination and genuine articulation between the sectors. Support under the Participation and Equity Program for the establishment of educational networks offer an opportunity for these barriers to be removed.

1.7 Substantial re-examination of education in the post-compulsory years will ensure that TAFE initiatives have an increasing impact on educational opportunities. In five States, reviews and inquiries on secondary education have recently been completed or are nearing completion; in a sixth, a committee has been established to review current educational and training provisions for 15-19 year olds since the Commonwealth's new Program was announced. It is reasonable to suppose then that important changes are likely to be implemented by many authorities in the near future.

1.8 While progress is being made by school authorities in States and Territories, major difficulties persist. They persist in particular for groups of students for whom appropriate provision has yet to be satisfactorily made. The proportion of students in this category is likely to increase as systems and schools face significant enrolment increases in Year 11 of young people progressively less able to find employment after Year 10. Without urgent action, they will remain at a disadvantage.

1.9 The Commission believes that the action on these issues already under way in States will be significantly strengthened by the new Participation and Equity Program.

Related Commonwealth Programs

1.10 The Commonwealth's most recent and significant initiative directly related to secondary education has been the **School to Work Transition Program** which was established as a five-year program beginning in 1980. In 1984 the Transition Program will be subsumed within the Participation and Equity Program and will be administered according to the new objectives.

1.11 The Transition Program has achieved some notable successes. It is widely seen as having evolved from its initial role of improving the employment chances of young people into a valuable working model for educational change, involving more flexible programs and approaches which are more closely related to out-of-school reality. There is widespread support for a continuation of some of the approaches to curriculum, staffing and organisation made possible by the Transition Program.

1.12 The Transition Program's main limitations have been its lack of impact on 'mainstream' students and programs; and the lack of standing and esteem for courses developed under it. The broader principles and objectives of the Participation and Equity Program will aim to encourage schools to address questions of cultural and social diversity through the school curriculum in ways which avoid legitimising existing inequalities.

1.13 The Commission expects that by the end of 1984 systems and authorities will have made the necessary arrangements for former Transition Program activities to be fully integrated into the Participation and Equity Program. They should plan on the assumption that funds will not be available in 1985 from Participation and Equity Program sources to retain separate Transition Program units or personnel.

1.14 An important feature of the Transition Program to be extended under the Participation and Equity Program is the co-operative administrative arrangements between the States and the Commonwealth. These arrangements reflect the principles of collaborative national effort which underpin the new Program.

1.15 In addition to general support for provision of secondary education through its general resources Programs, the Schools Commission supports reform and development of secondary education through special purposes programs. These now also provide useful models for future action under the Participation and Equity Program.

1.16 The **Disadvantaged Schools Program** which has operated since 1974 has sought to promote greater equality of educational opportunities by positive discrimination in resource allocation and by encouraging the adaptation of school programs to the special needs and life experiences of students. There are close links between the objectives of the Disadvantaged Schools Program and the new Participation and Equity Program and obvious similarities in the processes to be followed. Arrangements for close co-ordination of the two will be given early consideration in 1984. For next year declared disadvantaged schools will also be eligible to benefit through the Participation and Equity Program.

1.17 Programs such as **English as a Second Language** and **Multicultural Education** which aim to improve the competence in English of students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds and to foster community languages, are directly concerned with one of the Participation and Equity Program's target groups. Closer links and the co-ordination of effort and activity between these Programs and the Participation and Equity Program are to be developed during 1984. Although much of the professional development activity specific to Participation and Equity Program objectives will be arranged under the Program's aegis, accumulated experience within the **Professional Development Program** may provide helpful models for improving the quality of schooling through improving the professional competence of staff and the capacity of parents to contribute to the education of their children. There will be close co-ordination between the Professional Development and Participation and Equity Programs to ensure activities and objectives under the new arrangements are consistent.

1.18 In 1984 the **Curriculum Development Centre** is to be re-established within the Commonwealth Schools Commission, with a charter to function as a policy agency. The decision to reactivate the Curriculum Development Centre will be a significant factor in enabling the Participation and Equity Program objectives to be achieved — since curriculum reform and development is central to the proposed renewal of secondary education.

CHAPTER 2

Participation and Retention: Selected Statistics

2.1 The Funding Guidelines have made it clear that there is to be a specific emphasis in the Program on secondary schools with ***low retention rates.*** It is important, therefore, that the distinction between the terms participation and retention is clear: in this paper, participation refers to the general concept of engagement in formal educational activity, while retention refers more specifically to the number and proportion of students remaining at school to the second last and last year of secondary education.

2.2 Although retention rates are an important indicator of educational participation for the age group of most immediate interest for the Participation and Equity Program, they have significant limitations. They do not, for example, allow proper account to be taken of the fact that some States have had highly regarded courses terminating in Year 11 for many years. Retention rates for individual schools vary considerably over time, fluctuating in ways which make it difficult to discern trends, draw comparisons or make valid generalisations about a school's year-to-year situation. They also take no account of factors like transfers between government and non-government sectors, transfers between schools and the repeating of years.

2.3 Table 1 shows apparent retention rates (that is, the proportion of the cohort of students from the first year of secondary schooling remaining until the second last and last years) for male and female students in government and non-government (Catholic and other) schools in Australia from 1972 to 1982. Table 2 shows age participation rates by gender for all schools from 1972 to 1982. Final figures for 1983 are not yet available but preliminary data indicate that secondary school enrolments among students aged 15-17 years increased by 7 per cent between April 1982 and April 1983 with male enrolments increasing by 11.4 per cent and female by 2.9 per cent. School participation rates of 15-17 year olds in April 1983 were estimated as identical, at about 60 per cent for males and females.

2.4 Even when allowance is made for transfers from government schools, the non-Catholic non-government sector clearly has the highest retention rates, followed by Catholic schools, with a smaller gap then to government schools. The differences in retention rates between government schools and non-Catholic non-government schools in particular, suggest that retention may well be closely related to the socio-economic composition of the student population. The limited data available indicate that the government secondary school population spans the entire socio-economic range, with a relative concentration of students from the lower end in them; the independent non-Catholic schools have a relatively high concentration of students from the higher socio-economic groups; the Catholic school population spans the full socio-economic range with a greater concentration around the middle. Data for one State published this year show that retention to the final year of school varies between 15 per cent and 70 per cent for government schools serving communities of quite different socio-economic character. There are indications also that rates vary for government schools serving areas of similar socio-economic character, suggesting that schools themselves can affect retention through the climate and the programs they establish. One of the objectives of the Participation and Equity Program will be to reduce these large variations. The importance of socio-economic differences can be seen in the contrast between the educational pathways which lead on the one hand through full secondary schooling to universities and, within them, to prestigious faculties; and on the other those which are characterised by early school leaving and extended unemployment.

2.5 Retention rates for girls, historically lower than those for boys in each school category, increased substantially throughout the 1970's and edged ahead of the rates for boys. This gender differential became particularly pronounced in the rates for retention to the second last year. This probably reflects the fact that girls have had a narrowing range of alternatives as the job market for female juniors declined during the latter half of the 1970's, while that for boys — particularly in the subsidised area of apprenticeships — held up reasonably well until its sharp decline in the last twelve months or so. The increased retention for girls perhaps also reflects some changing social attitudes towards the education and career needs of females, although this must be qualified to the extent that sex stereotypes continue to obstruct subject and career choices.

2.6 The data on apparent retention rates shown in Table 1 indicate an increase over 1981 and previous years in apparent retention to both the final and the second last year of secondary schooling. The most striking feature is the significant jump in the figures for retention to the second last year, for males in government schools in particular. The age participation rates shown in Table 2 give the same indications — a reversal of the declining participation rates in the post-

compulsory phase of recent years; 1982 was the first year since 1976 in which there was an increase in male participation. This increased participation, especially among males, which appears to have become more pronounced in 1983, represents a clear break in the trend of the last decade. It is associated with the rapid deterioration in the youth labour market, which saw just on 80,000 full-time jobs held by teenagers disappear in 1982 and the number of new apprenticeships drop by about 30 per cent. Whether this increased participation is consolidated into a new trend will depend not only on developments in labour demand but also on the capacity of schools to respond to this changing population.

2.7 There continues to be a substantial drop in retention from Year 11 to Year 12. This no doubt reflects a variety of factors — structural, as in the Victorian technical school system, attitudinal and historical. It also underlines the importance in planning future educational change of treating the last two years more as an entity, an idea which has already been taken up by a number of systems.

2.8 Several education authorities have expressed serious reservations about the suitability of using a simple measure like retention rates to determine target groups or target schools for the Program. The Commission shares these misgivings. In addition to the difficulties discussed above over what the retention rate figure for an individual school actually represents at a given time, there are problems about whether such a simple figure or a comparable participation statistic is the most helpful in addressing the issue of most concern in this Program — participation in an equitable pattern of education, training or employment beyond the compulsory level of secondary schooling.

2.9 No national data have so far been collected which present a complete picture of the post-compulsory phase of education for young people in the 15-19 years age group. A recently published working paper for the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE) attempts to do this for Victoria.* The major findings of this study are shown in Figures 1 and 2 and are summarised by the author in the following way:

- 61.9 per cent of 15-19 years olds were in full-time education and training in 1982
- 8.4 per cent were involved in education and training on a part-time basis in 1982
- 70.3 per cent of the cohort were participating in education and training on a full- or part-time basis in 1982
- more young people participated in education and training in 1982 than in 1981.

This study also shows the following gender differentials (in Victoria):

- male and female participation patterns were markedly different at all age levels
- greater numbers of females participated in schools, colleges of advanced education, hospital-based nursing training, business colleges, and other courses
- greater numbers of males participated in apprenticeships and universities
- the participation of males overall was markedly greater than that of females
- there appear to be two distinct, gender-based educational pathways.'

2.10 Of particular significance for the planning and development of the Program in Victoria are the findings that the ***total*** rate of participation in education, training or a combination of these was over 70 per cent, and that there were striking gender differentials operating to limit the options open to girls. At the same time, they also underline the fact that secondary school retention is the single most critical factor in educational participation by the 15-17 years age group and that full-time (and total) participation in education and training reduces sharply after the compulsory years of schooling. In the 19 year old age group, the working paper shows that only one-third were full-time in education and training and over half the age group had no involvement in formal education or training of any kind.

2.11 Retention rates vary considerably from State to State, with differences in the final secondary year rate ranging up to 10 per cent for government schools and 20 per cent for the other sectors. Participation in other forms of post-compulsory education is likely to vary to the same extent, so no generalisations based upon the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education paper can be made. Studies along the same lines are obviously needed urgently to enable a national overview to be taken, as well as to focus State planning and development activities.

2.12 During 1984 the Commission will examine the possibility of more detailed studies of relevant data on retention rates and participation. These would include raw retention data, information on participation in post-school education, training and/or employment of those leaving school at the end of and before the final year of compulsory schooling, and data on unemployment amongst school leavers.

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* Helen Praetz, 'Working Paper; Education and Employment: Patterns of Participation of Victorian 15-19 Year Olds' (VISE, September 1983).

TABLE 1

Apparent Retention Rates

Australia

	GOVERNMENT			NON-GOVERNMENT			CATHOLIC			OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT			ALL SCHOOLS		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
1st to Final Yr															
1972	30.2	24.8	27.6	56.1	41.5	48.5	41.7	29.3	35.2	94.6	78.3	86.5	35.7	28.9	32.4
1973	29.2	26.6	27.9	58.0	44.2	50.8	44.1	32.0	37.7	95.1	80.9	88.0	35.2	30.8	33.1
1974	27.6	26.9	27.3	58.3	47.0	52.5	44.6	34.1	39.1	94.4	86.1	90.3	34.1	31.6	32.9
1975	28.4	28.8	28.6	57.9	49.1	53.4	45.9	36.4	40.9	89.6	86.7	88.2	34.6	33.6	34.1
1976	28.6	30.7	29.6	57.5	50.7	54.0	44.9	38.5	41.5	90.5	87.1	88.9	34.6	35.3	34.9
1977	27.8	31.9	29.7	57.5	52.5	54.9	46.0	40.7	43.2	87.6	87.5	87.6	34.0	36.6	35.3
1978	27.0	32.3	29.6	55.5	53.6	54.5	44.4	42.0	43.1	83.8	87.4	85.5	33.1	37.3	35.1
1979	26.1	31.9	28.9	56.0	54.8	55.4	44.7	43.6	44.1	85.8	88.5	87.1	32.4	37.2	34.7
1980	25.2	31.9	28.4	56.9	55.4	56.1	45.6	44.1	44.8	86.4	89.5	87.9	31.9	37.3	34.5
1981	25.1	32.1	28.5	57.0	56.8	56.9	45.5	45.6	45.6	87.1	91.5	89.2	32.0	37.8	34.8
1982	25.9	33.6	29.6	57.3	59.6	58.5	46.6	48.3	47.5	84.5	92.9	88.5	32.9	39.9	36.3
1st to 2nd Last Year															
1972	46.4	41.8	44.2	66.7	57.3	61.9	53.2	44.4	48.6	103.3	95.9	99.6	50.7	45.5	48.2
1973	45.1	42.9	44.1	68.0	59.8	63.7	54.6	46.6	50.4	103.4	99.4	101.4	49.9	46.9	48.4
1974	43.0	42.7	42.8	67.9	61.6	64.7	55.2	48.5	51.7	101.4	100.5	100.9	48.2	47.1	47.7
1975	46.2	46.3	46.2	67.9	63.6	65.7	55.6	51.6	53.5	100.3	99.4	99.9	50.7	50.3	50.5
1976	46.6	48.5	47.5	69.7	66.2	67.9	58.1	54.6	56.3	99.8	100.7	100.3	51.4	52.6	52.0
1977	45.7	50.4	48.0	67.4	67.6	67.5	56.5	56.3	56.4	95.3	100.4	97.8	50.3	54.4	52.3
1978	46.3	51.5	48.9	69.0	70.1	69.6	57.5	59.3	58.4	99.3	102.7	100.9	51.1	55.8	53.4
1979	45.0	51.3	48.0	70.6	70.7	70.6	59.1	59.8	59.5	100.3	103.5	101.8	50.4	55.8	53.0
1980	45.3	52.4	48.7	71.0	73.3	72.2	59.6	62.2	60.9	100.7	107.9	104.2	50.8	57.3	54.0
1981	45.9	53.8	49.7	71.5	75.5	73.5	61.0	64.5	62.8	97.8	108.1	102.7	51.6	59.0	55.2
1982	48.3	55.1	51.6	74.0	78.0	76.1	63.6	67.7	65.7	100.6	108.5	104.4	54.2	60.8	57.4

Source: Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs — Statistical Monograph No. 9, Seventh Edition (September 1983).

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TABLE 2

Age Participation Rates (per cent)
All Schools

Australia

Age (in years)	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
Males											
14	97.5	95.9	96.8	95.4	97.1	97.2	97.4	97.8	97.5	97.7	98.3
15	82.3	82.2	80.5	83.8	83.8	85.2	86.4	86.1	85.7	85.7	86.0
16	56.7	55.9	55.0	56.2	57.7	56.8	58.2	57.5	56.4	54.8	56.2
17	33.3	31.7	31.1	31.4	31.4	31.0	30.5	30.2	28.2	28.1	27.9
18	10.3	9.4	8.1	8.0	8.0	7.4	7.2	7.1	6.0	5.5	5.8
19 +	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7
15–19	37.7	37.0	36.1	37.2	37.8	37.2	37.2	36.4	34.9	34.3	35.0
Females											
14	96.7	95.7	96.8	96.4	97.6	98.0	96.6	97.2	97.3	97.6	97.7
15	79.2	79.2	79.8	82.5	83.6	85.4	86.5	86.5	86.5	86.4	86.9
16	49.5	51.0	51.0	54.3	56.9	57.9	59.6	59.1	58.5	58.1	59.6
17	25.8	26.8	27.6	28.9	30.7	32.0	32.5	32.6	30.7	31.1	31.9
18	5.5	5.5	5.0	5.4	5.7	6.1	6.1	6.3	5.4	4.8	5.0
19 +	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7
15–19	32.6	33.3	33.6	35.3	36.6	37.1	37.5	37.0	35.8	35.4	36.2
Persons											
14	97.1	95.8	96.8	95.9	97.4	97.6	97.0	97.5	97.4	97.7	98.1
15	80.8	80.8	80.2	83.1	83.7	85.3	86.5	86.3	86.1	86.0	86.5
16	53.2	53.5	53.0	55.3	57.3	57.3	58.9	58.3	57.4	56.4	57.9
17	29.6	29.3	29.4	30.2	31.1	31.5	31.5	31.4	29.4	29.6	30.2
18	7.9	7.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	5.7	5.1	5.4
19 +	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.7
15–19	35.2	35.2	34.9	36.3	37.2	37.2	37.3	36.7	35.4	34.8	35.6

Source: Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs — Statistical Monograph No. 3.

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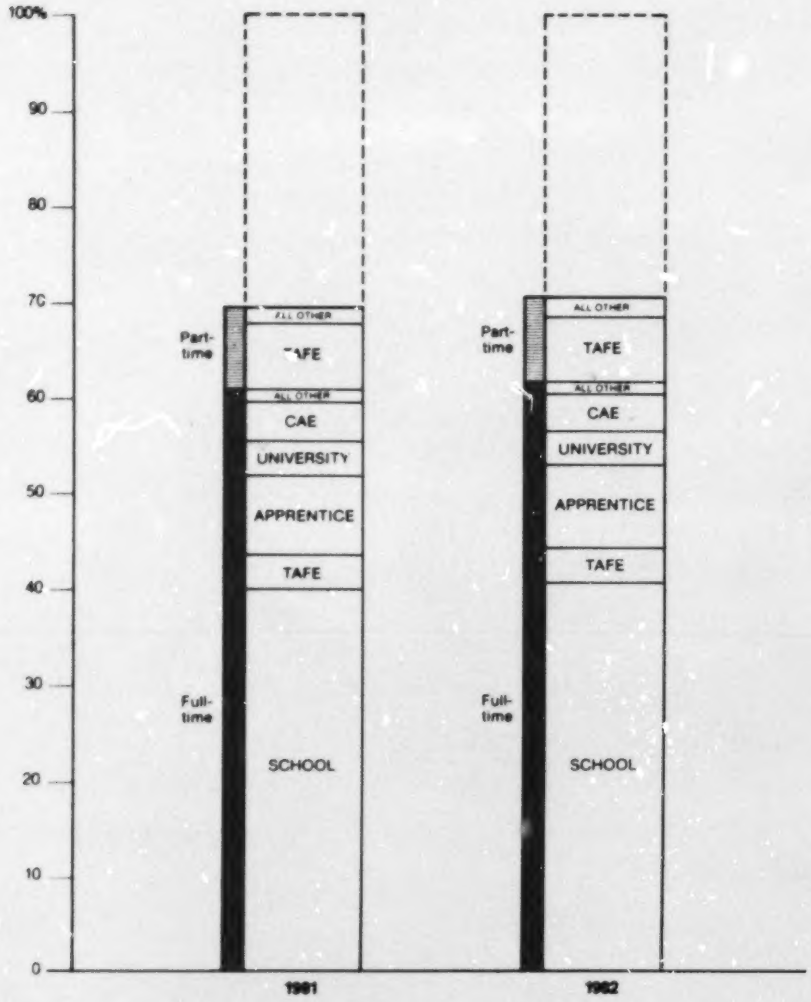
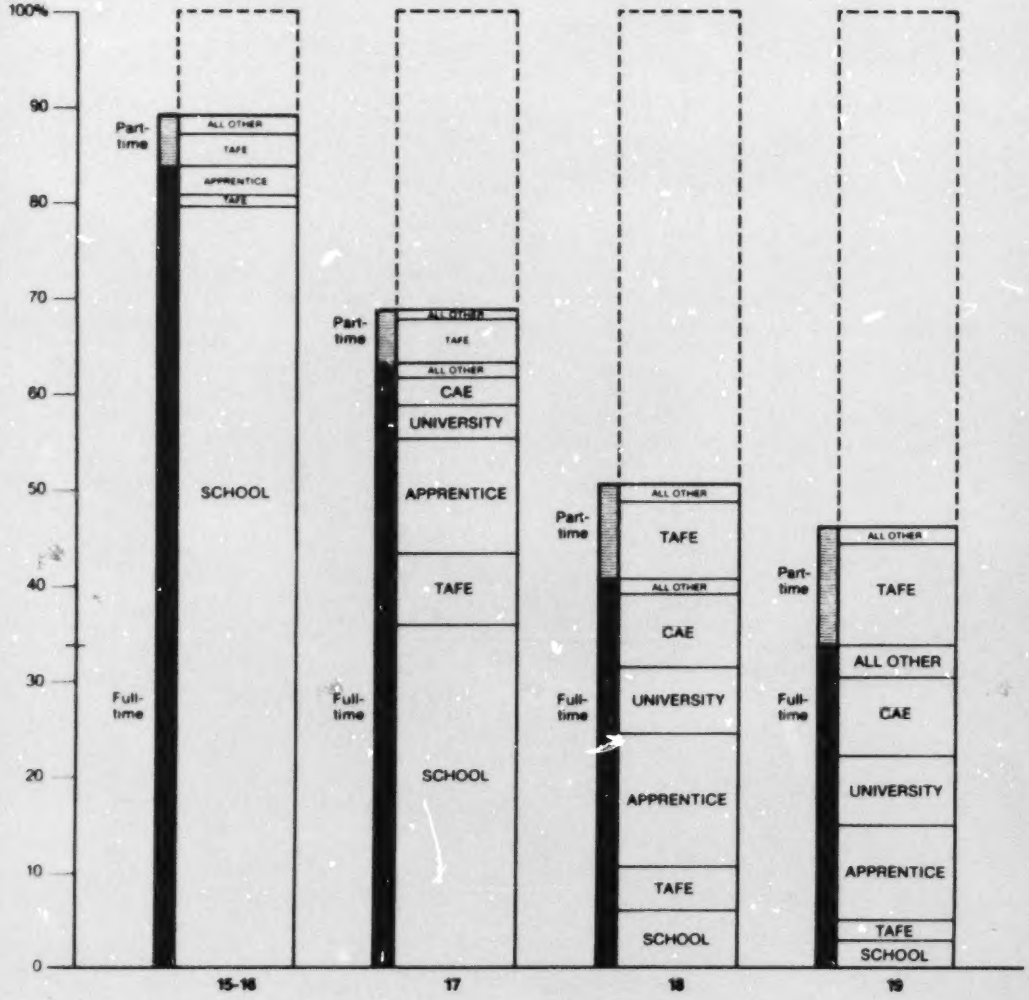
FIGURE 1
Participation in education and training of 15–19 year-olds, Victoria 1981–1982



Source: Helen Praetz, 'Working Paper: Education and Employment: Patterns of Participation of Victorian 15-19 Year Olds (VISE, September 1983).

FIGURE 2
Participation in education and training of 15–16, 17, 18 and 19 year-olds, Victoria 1982



Source: Helen Praetz, 'Working Paper; Education and Employment: Patterns of Participation of Victorian 15-19 Year Olds (VISE, September 1983).

CHAPTER 3

Participation and Equity

3.1 The 1984 Funding Guidelines to the Commonwealth Education Commissions referred to the twin objectives of the new Program: increased participation in education; and fairer provision for all. The Commission believes strongly that these two objectives must be pursued jointly, and that they must be combined with measures to improve learning for all young people.

3.2 The objective of increased participation rests on the principle that all young people have an equal entitlement to full secondary schooling or its equivalent. It is against the interests of our society for excellence in education to be pursued in ways which suggest that there is no place for less advantaged young people in upper secondary education. Neither will society benefit from measures which do not address the needs of the average student or which reduce inequalities by lowering expectations for all young people. On the contrary, the onset of fundamental economic and technological changes and their related effects will require higher levels of general education and the development of an adaptive workforce.

3.3 What is needed is a rise in participation which reflects a stronger commitment to learning by the whole age group. This requires schools to recognise and respond to the different ways young people learn. Unless schools can provide a rewarding and useful education for the more diverse group they are now required to serve, then extending access to schooling could deepen existing inequalities or lead to diluted standards for all.

Participation

3.4 Participating in education is not a simple matter for every Australian child. Even in the age group where schooling is compulsory, special measures are necessary to ensure that some children can attend school. Without such action, many disabled children for example are automatically excluded from mainstream schooling. Children from itinerant families can face difficulties in attending school, along with those isolated by distance. There is little or no provision for formal secondary schooling in remote Aboriginal communities in some States. Even in urban areas, the cultural clash between home and school leads to some girls from ethnic minorities being withrawn from schooling.

3.5 The disruptive effects of severe poverty and of domestic discord can also prevent school attendance. Beyond the compulsory years, lack of income support, homelessness, and health, transport and welfare problems are barriers to participation in education for some adolescents.

3.6 There is far more to participation than merely staying on at school. For example, girls presently have slightly higher school participation rates than boys. But this has arisen from gender divisions in our society which create occupational segregation and limit employment opportunities for young people of both sexes. The higher female participation rates in schooling over recent years have been partly a function of the decline during that period of male participation. Because of the emphasis placed on the instrumental value of education for males, boys were being encouraged to leave school early to take up available jobs as soon as it became widely apparent that the pool of jobs for school leavers was rapidly shrinking. The lower emphasis on the utilitarian value of education for girls as a path to long-term employment and economic independence has partly insulated them from this pressure to secure a job as soon as possible. Girls are also in schools in relatively greater numbers because, again due to the way work, both paid and unpaid, is divided between men and women in society, fewer of them enter apprenticeships, and if they leave school early they face higher rates of unemployment. So, while girls are advantaged in their access to schooling for its own sake, quite irrespective of its outcomes in terms of direct rewards or status, the 'cultural dowry' approach to schooling for girls has contributed to women's economic dependence and its social and political consequences. While many educational practices are based on unexamined and irrational assumptions about the differences between men and women, many of the real differences between them are ignored, and the achievements and life experiences of girls and women are under-valued and issues of concern to them kept hidden.

3.7 Participation has much to do with the quality of the relationship between students, their parents and schools; the extent to which they share access to all the school or the system has to offer; and the degree to which the school curriculum, organisation and climate for learning accords with their experiences, values, interests and aspirations.

3.8 The Participation and Equity Program is concerned with furthering the development of secondary schooling in Australia by assisting schools and systems to raise the quality of schooling for all young people. Dissatisfaction with schooling is not confined to those from disadvantaged groups or with learning disabilities. Many able and even gifted students leave school prematurely, disappointed by programs which

present them with no challenge, or by other aspects of school life. At the same time, there is a need for changes which will ensure the inclusion in mainstream education of those who currently leave prematurely or whose needs are subordinated, because of differences arising from class, gender, ethnicity or from individual characteristics.

3.9 While there may be little advantage to our society in concentrating on increasing participation for its own sake, it must be recognised that early school leavers are over-represented among the long-term unemployed. Those young people from groups whose life chances have always been poorest are over-represented among early school leavers. To some extent then merely staying longer at school can offer some individuals a better position than others in the competition for scarce jobs, and they have a right to understand this. This is not to deny the much broader purpose of schooling, and the contribution schools can make to a more just and educated society.

Equity

3.10 The principle of equity requires that schools and systems will treat all children fairly and, as far as practicable, will avoid policies and practices which advantage some social groups and disadvantage others.

3.11 As the population in secondary schools has increased dramatically over the last two decades, its nature and composition has changed much faster than has the capacity to respond to the new needs and demands this has posed. Much of the recent discussion of student alienation and dissatisfaction with school is related to these circumstances; these problems become more intense as students progress through the secondary school. The recent increases in participation in secondary education by the 15-19 years age group have been characterised by significantly greater representation of girls, a growing proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and of those born outside Australia. At the same time, students, parents, employers and the community at large have developed new, more wide-ranging, and often contradictory expectations of secondary education.

3.12 The social climate in which young people are growing up today differs in many respects from a generation ago. The emergence of a youth culture presents a challenge to schools, as do the effects of the demands by women, Aborigines and other minority ethnic groups for equal status in society. These changes are occurring along with profound economic and technological changes which in themselves have widespread social and educational implications. This has produced a confused situation for all secondary schools and their students, with young people from the least influential sections of our society tending to fare worst.

3.13 In addition, schools are part of a competitive society organised in ways which advantage some more than others. Social factors can converge in schools to magnify disadvantages associated with social background and learning capacity; as a result many students are eased out of school prematurely.

3.14 Successive Commission reports draw attention to the need to ensure that attempts to remove obstacles to learning do not hinder those they were intended to help. For instance, trivial activities which entertain students may make schooling more enjoyable for them and even encourage them to stay. But students who have been provided for in this way, while other groups undertake activities which lead to valuable personal, social and educational options, have been short-changed. Teachers and students in the classroom, working with parents, need to make increased participation significant and worthwhile, with all the support that systems, research scholars and funding agencies can provide.

3.15 While the negative effects of unresolved problems in schooling are felt most by those least able to defend themselves, particular groups have their own forms of educational disadvantage generally arising from their own relationship to schools and society. For example many Australian children are automatically disadvantaged because they are required to learn for all, or most of the time, in a language which is not spoken in their homes.

3.16 Despite the fact that success in many aspects of public and private life in Australia depends upon a capacity to communicate and co-operate effectively with others, Australian schools place greater emphasis on competitive, individualised school performance. This is disabling to those many students who come from class groups and cultural backgrounds where this is neither prized nor cultivated, but where there is a positive emphasis on informality, egalitarian behaviour, and group activities.

3.17 The increased participation of these groups in secondary schooling must affect the way schools operate, as they adapt to the needs of a broader student population. Facilitating and speeding up this adaptation will be a major emphasis in the Participation and Equity Program. However, all-purpose, generalist approaches will not suffice to overcome the enormous difficulties facing particular groups, and special measures will continue to be needed to overcome the barriers to learning and to full participation in education arising from differences in social class, race, language, culture and gender.

3.18 An increase in participation in schools and in education generally will require extensive research and development to evolve programs and processes which are fair to all and which lead directly to improved learning. This will in turn require a stimulation and intensification of developments already taking place in schools and systems and a total community commitment to the changes which are necessary.

Renewal of Secondary Education: A Broad Agenda

3.19 The Participation and Equity Program will place special emphasis on curriculum-based school improvement plans. It will require a concerted effort centring on fundamental improvement to the secondary curriculum as a whole. This effort must not ignore the primary school; many early school leavers are already disadvantaged on entering secondary schools and action at this stage may well be too late.

3.20 It must be recognised also that what students, parents and schools do is profoundly influenced by what they believe about the relationship between schooling and later life. For this reason, development of the secondary curriculum cannot be successful without attention to its links with the worlds of work, further education, the wider social world, and the controversial issues of the day.

3.21 Following consultations and discussions with government and non-government systems in the States and Territories, consideration of particular State initiatives and the inquiries and investigations being undertaken in various systems, the Commission has concluded that attention can be concentrated on a number of key elements as the basis for further development of secondary education.

3.22 In setting out a broad agenda for the renewal of secondary schooling, the Commission is drawing on the practical experiences of those most closely involved. The Commission wishes to acknowledge the success of particular schools in charting the directions for change and improvement. There are many outstanding schools serving broad student populations, often with a concentration of young people from less advantaged groups, and responding daily to many of the challenges described above. These schools exist throughout the country and are notable for the professionalism of teachers committed to improved learning outcomes of their students.

3.23 In the Commission's view, these schools have lacked the public recognition their efforts deserve. A constructive approach to their achievements, especially by the media, would do much to inform the public about the potential of schooling for all, and to engender public confidence in education.

3.24 In various ways these schools combine many or all of the following features:

- they are schools where time has been set aside to consider clear goals and educational strategies for achieving them
- major educational policy decisions are made by the staff as a whole, with the Principal and senior staff an integral part of the process; the role of the Principal as an educational leader is vital
- developments in school policy and curriculum are carefully planned in collaboration with parents and students and this process is maintained through strong communication channels within the school community
- students are treated with respect and have considerable responsibility in the running of the school
- the intellectual capacity of every student is challenged in ways which enable each to achieve the best of which he or she is capable.

Other important characteristics of schools committed to increasing participation are:

- a program which consistently links school activities to the outside community, indicating the relevance of school studies to everyday experience and making connections between different areas of study
- a teaching approach which recognises the value of experience-based learning, and the need to move from a consideration of experience and of problems seen as real, to more theoretical approaches
- a practical emphasis on personal and social development, including personal qualities such as moral awareness, responsibility, and concern for others
- assessment procedures which recognise the strengths in student work (profiling) and provide helpful information on progress and areas where help is needed
- a developing preparation for students throughout school life for work and adult life, avoiding too early specialisation but providing a broad basis of interests and skills
- a teaching approach which encourages curiosity, imagination and rationality, using discussion and reflection to enlarge understanding, reducing the amount of passive listening and a too-great emphasis on rote learning and stressing the gathering and evaluation of information in solving problems.
- a system of pastoral care which provides counselling and guidance for students and their parents, through individual members of staff with specific responsibilities.

These achievements need to be systematically

supported and further developed, so that all students, especially those from a disadvantaged background, can be guaranteed a rewarding and useful education.

3.25 The Commission believes that this development will require co-operative problem-solving. Neither a top-down centralised, authoritarian approach nor a laissez-faire local approach will suffice. An important element in this process will be the community debate of such issues as the need for common curriculum objectives which recognise the need of all people to communicate, to think and to value as well as to act and work together in the everyday world. Another issue which requires community discussion is how the curriculum in the post-compulsory years might be constructed to allow for diversity and specialisation while still catering equitably for the whole age group.

3.26 Within schooling systems it has been common for students to be described as 'academic' and 'non-academic'. When new and worthwhile programs are devised they are often implicitly represented as sub-standard by the use of this terminology and by referring to 'alternative' programs as being suitable to the 'less academically inclined'. This is even more likely to be the case where the 'academically able' remain in mainstream programs. This report has already referred to the learning barriers created for many students by an over-emphasis on individualised and competitive achievements.

3.27 The artificial contrasts drawn by opinion leaders and the media between different types of schools intensify this problem. Unfair comparisons are made between schools which are academically or economically selective or both and the comprehensive schools most Australian students attend. These comparisons are unhelpful as a basis for making generalised judgments on curriculum.

3.28 Accreditation and credentialling procedures developed as tertiary entrance selection criteria can be a barrier to curriculum renewal and, in turn, to higher participation and equity in education. Assessment, credentialling and accreditation procedures act to discourage many students from post-compulsory education both at school and beyond. These disincentives do not commence in the secondary school for some students, but can start with the negative effects of 'labelling' and testing procedures (including IQ testing) in primary schools.

3.29 The orientation of credentialling and assessment procedures in most systems to the admission requirements of tertiary institutions creates difficulties for schools in developing programs for the full range of senior students. This can not only inhibit curriculum change and school organisation, but can even influence methods of teaching and learning, placing a premium on teacher-centred lecture-type instruction.

3.30 Current assessment and credentialling procedures contribute significantly to the under-representation of specifically disadvantaged groups in post-compulsory schooling. These groups can have acute difficulty in ascribing value or significance to the content of many courses structured and presented to meet the requirements for tertiary entrance. Some tertiary institutions are working with schools to overcome these difficulties and to develop broader admission procedures consistent with school curriculum needs. A great deal more such concern by all tertiary institutions is necessary if the distorting effect of their entry requirements and selection procedures for particular faculties is to be reduced.

3.31 Another problem related to assessment in senior secondary education is the willingness of the community at large, and employers and parents in particular, to equate successful completion of secondary education with scores in examinations or related end-of-school assessment procedures designed for the narrower and more specific purpose of tertiary entrance.

3.32 An over-emphasis on competition in learning and credentialling can affect the whole learning environment and lead to rigid forms of school organisation. Students may be forced into lock-step arrangements which are educationally inappropriate. The Commission favours forms of organisation which recognise the fact that students vary in the time they need for particular learning tasks and which allow students time to upgrade their performance in particular areas, to re-enter post-compulsory schooling after a time out of school, or to combine schooling with employment or training. The Commission also believes that systems and schools should structure programs to avoid the necessity for premature specialisation. The objective of a broad, general education will not be served by a very narrow range of subject choice at the end of secondary education.

3.33 One of the central tasks of schools is to introduce students to traditional intellectual disciplines and to give them the opportunity to enjoy and master them. The Commission believes this experience is the right of all students. In secondary schools this may entail looking afresh at the relationships between the disciplines and the traditional methods and subject matter through which they are presented. It will require subject specialist teachers to collaborate in designing programs which assist students to make the links between subjects and to understand how different disciplines can be applied to problems of the students' world. It will also require the reform of inflexible subject-based time-tabling which can

lead to sharp divisions within schools on the basis of gender, social class and achievement.

3.34 The Participation and Equity Program requires that ways be found to introduce all students to the significant ideas, experiences and traditions which make up contemporary culture. Education in the literary, visual and performing arts has a special place in schools:

- in recognising the aesthetic values and tastes of young people from all ethnic and class backgrounds
- contributing to the development and understanding of an Australian identity in a multicultural context
- developing personal sensibility and skills for employment and creative use of leisure time.

3.35 Schools need to be organised so that time is divided in ways consistent with the desired learning outcomes. Students cannot become committed to some intellectual and practical tasks (for example extended writing or a science experiment) when the school day is carved into segments which make sustained effort and concentration impossible. Similarly, flexibility in the way the school year is structured can greatly broaden the range and depth of studies available to students.

3.36 Unsatisfying working conditions arising from some of the problems mentioned here can sour the relationships between students and their teachers and can be the direct cause of discipline problems. Similarly, the learning environment in many schools is uncomfortable and discouraging for students. Inadequate library and other specialist facilities may limit learning. Many schools lack the facilities to allow private or group study or group social activities appropriate to senior secondary students.

Participation in Curriculum Decisions

3.37 Despite progress in the last twenty years in home-school relationships another obstacle to curriculum advance in secondary schools is poor communication and interaction between teachers, parents and students. The whole school community must be committed to proposed improvements. Parents are more likely to feel confidence about proposed changes when they have been able to influence the process throughout. Special measures must be taken to ensure that it is not only parents from a narrow social and educational background who take part in decision-making.

3.38 Through an active partnership between home, school and the wider community, schools can develop a real process of genuine accountability, instead of merely reporting to a passive school community the outcome of policies it has had no hand in shaping. Parents and students also have an important role to play in engaging the wider community support and confidence schools need. Teachers, parents and students should be represented in decision-making through a democratic process which ensures that changes being made in schools have the support of broadly-based parent, teacher and (where these are developing) student organisations.

3.39 It is essential for parents, students and teachers to reach agreement on how the school is going to foster positive and co-operative behaviour, if serious tensions over discipline are to be avoided.

3.40 Parents and students are too often involved in token ways. Experience in several Australian systems indicates that the establishment of formal participatory structures is necessary but not sufficient for real participation to occur; resources must also be provided to develop the capacity of young people and inexperienced parents to contribute to school planning and policy. For teachers, being able to collaborate with students and parents is part of professionalism today; but they, too, need support and experience to acquire new skills and to build new relationships to work effectively with an increasingly diverse student group.

3.41 The goals of the Program do not imply that all young people should necessarily engage in continuous and full-time schooling. The need to cater for a diverse student population will require the co-operation of further education institutions, including TAFE colleges, colleges of advanced education and universities in the development of a wider range of programs which ensure that the most effective use is made of the educational resources available to young people.

Students with Special Needs

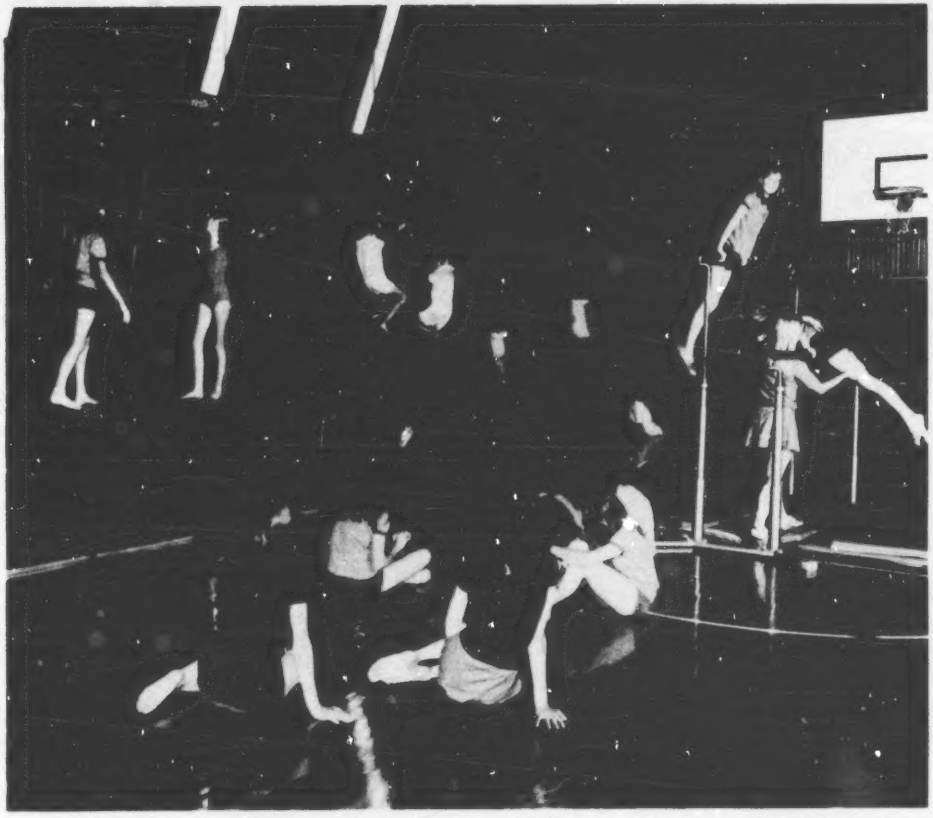
3.42.1 In addition to groups already identified in this paper, there are small groups of teenagers who fall outside existing schooling provision altogether, for instance, homeless young people and those who have no family support and who gravitate to areas of towns and cities, some becoming involved with drugs and prostitution. Disabled adolescents for whom educational services end abruptly and prematurely comprise another such group.

3.42.2 In some Aboriginal communities, there are no provisions at all for secondary schooling, and the concept of youth as an extended stage between childhood and adulthood is not part of the culture. Another group for whom existing institutional arrangements are inadequate are young refugees from war-torn areas who have had little or no schooling and who require extensive and specialised assistance.

3.43 The renewal of secondary education will

require public commitment. The extent of public regard for our schools affects significantly what they can achieve. Support for schools and for measures which can lead to improved and more equitable outcomes and higher participation needs to come from many sources. Developing and sustaining this support must be a focus of this new Program at Commonwealth, State and local level.

3.44 Curriculum reform and development cannot be considered apart from the effectiveness of teachers. An ageing teaching force cannot prepare students for the future without opportunities for professional renewal. What is required, in association with the Participation and Equity Program, is the development of a policy of systematic and continuous teacher education. Consultations have already taken place between the Schools Commission and the Tertiary Education Commission on the joint review of teacher education called for in the Guidelines. It is to focus on national objectives and on the need for an accomplished and effective teaching force able to implement the twin goals of increased participation and equity in education.



CHAPTER 4

Basic Principles and Objectives of the Participation and Equity Program

4.1 The broad objectives of the Program are to assist in achieving a fundamental improvement in the quality of schooling; and, by this means, to encourage the majority of young people to complete the equivalent of a full secondary education. The Program must be seen in an historical context. The endeavour to provide universal secondary education is barely four decades old in this country, and schools are still adapting to a situation where a whole age group is involved, even to the end of the compulsory stage.

4.2 A fundamental assumption in these objectives is that Australia should continue to progress towards the goal of universal participation in secondary education. Underlying this is the conviction that full secondary education, or an appropriate equivalent, is intrinsically valuable. It should not be seen as simply a reaction to the problems of the labour market nor as criticism of the existing education systems. It should rather be viewed as a positive, further stage in the evolution of education in Australia and the expansion of educational opportunities and rights of all young people. A full education policy of this kind will also be the basis for life-long learning, and should become a significant foundation for the emerging national youth policy. Furthermore, the development of a skilled, productive and cohesive workforce is necessary for Australia's economic well-being.

4.3 This is not to suggest that schooling should be narrowly vocational. On the contrary, rapidly changing technologies and their widespread social effects will demand that young people give serious thought to the fundamental social changes occurring in the world they are entering. They will also require a general capacity for learning skills rather than any particular learned skills. New skills will be constantly required, including those needed for negotiating new social arrangements. The need for schooling to lay down the foundations for life-long learning is more pressing than ever. Schools can contribute by ensuring that young people, at whatever stage they leave school, do so with positive attitudes to learning which will assist them to move back into formal education or training with ease. Some early school leavers go straight into other forms of education and training. But there are still too many young people who leave demoralised, convinced they have little or no capacity for learning.

4.4 The Program is not intended to disguise youth unemployment by giving young people who would otherwise be unemployed something to occupy their time. Along with other social and educational institutions and agencies, secondary schools must adapt to the structural shift in the labour market. A return to high demand for the labour of 15-18 year olds now seems most unlikely. This change cannot be managed by schools alone and a range of comprehensive policies is needed to address the needs of young people for accommodation, health, transport and welfare services and for income support. These can directly improve opportunities for participation in schooling. The Commission is aware that these and related matters are to be taken up in the context of the forthcoming OECD Panel Review of Youth Policy in Australia.

4.5 Through the Participation and Equity Program systems, all schools and individuals with experience and expertise which could assist others will be encouraged to participate in a broad range of activities to strengthen and extend positive achievements and to develop new approaches for systems and schools. All schools should have opportunities to participate in the pursuit of the equity goals of the Program, and should co-operate in meeting their shared responsibility to the full range of students.

4.6 It is not the purpose of this Program to encourage or assist individual schools to raise their own retention rates by confining their efforts to those students best placed by social circumstances to complete schooling, either through selective enrolment policies or by ignoring the needs of some of the students they enrol. There is a need to avoid entrenching the conflicting approaches within either the government or the non-government system, or between the two. The situation should be avoided where some schools, serving predominantly low-income areas, take steps to adapt their provisions and to make flexible arrangements for students; while other schools, in predominantly affluent areas, retreat either by design or default to a narrow and elitist position from which, by virtue of their social influence, they may well obscure the achievements of other schools and students.

4.7 The new Program will require the development of more diverse and useful credentialling procedures and measures of student achievement. This will be necessary to the development of a broad, general school curriculum which goes

beyond the narrowly 'academic' or 'vocational' in its provision for all students. Such a broadening of curriculum and related assessment and credentialling procedures will benefit all schools and tertiary institutions.

4.8 The need to grasp the significant ideas, experiences and traditions of our society is not confined to those proceeding directly to universities. All young people need to be able to communicate effectively in a wide range of public and private contexts. The need to move with confidence from school to further education and training, to contribute to society as a worker and as a member of a local community is shared by all young people. An important objective of the Participation and Equity Program will be to assist schools and systems to map more systematically than in the past the many paths to these common outcomes, through curriculum research and development at national (Curriculum Development Centre), system and school levels.

4.9 Co-operative efforts will also be encouraged to clear existing paths and to create new ones between schools and the broad range of educational, training and employment opportunities existing beyond the school. This will require closer co-operation between schools, TAFE colleges, colleges of advanced education, universities and all the other agencies with responsibilities for educating young people. Assessment and credentialling procedures which emphasise almost exclusively the requirements of university entrance obscure the paths to many other areas of learning and of employment. It is not the Commission's intention through this Program to dilute the intellectual quality or preparation of young people proceeding to higher education. Indeed, the Commission believes an emphasis on equity will expand the pool of talent proceeding to higher education.

4.10 To achieve the objectives set out above, special measures will be necessary to overcome the barriers to full and equal participation by girls, students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups, Aborigines, students from non-English speaking backgrounds and others for whom secondary provision has been inequitable. Co-operative efforts will be needed to explore further the nature of the disadvantages such students are facing; to increase awareness of how these can be overcome; and to provide the support and resources necessary for remedial action.

4.11 At all levels of the Program it will be vital to harness the expertise of those who have been working with disadvantaged groups, and the experience and advice of those involved in the School to Work Transition Program. It will also be necessary to provide direct support and assistance to those regions and schools with a concentration of groups who are under-represented in all areas of education and training beyond the compulsory years. The correlation between socio-economic indicators and school participation makes it essential that schools serving economically depressed areas with high unemployment levels be accorded priority. These schools require time and support during 1984 to plan for curriculum and organisational change. The experience gained in these schools will be of benefit to many other schools, including in particular the many schools with small pockets of disadvantaged students.

4.12 Another important objective of the Program will be to create a supportive climate for schools, based on information and broader understanding of the need for higher and more equitable levels of general education.

4.13 The Commission is aware that many fine achievements in schools are little known or understood by the community. Students, parents, teachers and their organisations have a key role in promoting this understanding. The need for more understanding of the needs of young people and ways of meeting them is not confined to any one group. While some schools, especially in poor communities, are faced with parent attitudes based on their own memories of boredom or failure, other schools have to contend with the narrowly defined views of success sometimes held by relatively affluent parents, with high expectations for their children. Parents, teachers and employers alike have difficulty in coming to terms with the fact that young people today are growing up in a society vastly different from that of a generation ago. The secondary schooling which served an earlier student generation drawn from a narrow range of social groups is no longer appropriate for all. This is not to deny the enduring value of many traditional and proven teaching approaches or to encourage indiscriminate innovation for its own sake.

4.14 The issues outlined in this chapter, and the way they relate to each other, are complex. No one authority can claim a monopoly on knowledge of how barriers to participation can be removed. For this reason, the Commission wishes to stress that 1984 will be a developmental and planning year, with emphasis on the sharing of information, expertise and decision-making; the establishment of networks; broadening debate on critical issues; appraising what has been achieved; and planning realistic future options. The Program will provide systems and schools with time to consider the issues broadly identified in this report and in the funding Guidelines; to engage the whole school community in planning ahead; and to respond to the ideas developed within systems and independent schools, tertiary institutions, parent and teacher organisations, and other interest groups, and by Commonwealth agencies

such as this Commission and the Curriculum Development Centre.

4.15 The achievement of its objectives will require close co-operation between all of these, and between governments, unions and employers. Most importantly, if a truly national effort is to be sustained, it will require the goodwill and support of young people.

CHAPTER 5

Proposed Areas for Action

5.1 The Commission has identified major areas for action under the Participation and Equity Program. While it is convenient to deal separately with these in this section of the paper, this should not obscure the fact that the factors affecting participation and equity in education are interdependent.

5.2 The Commission is recommending that the Program should initially support projects and activities in the following areas:

Curriculum: aiming to improve and adapt existing content and methods for a much broader range of students, and to support the collaborative development of new programs and courses where appropriate.

Assessment, Accreditation and Credentialling: developing more diverse and useful credentialling procedures and measures of student achievement which have the confidence of students, parents, employers and tertiary institutions and which enable schools to offer programs suitable for a broad range of students through to the end of secondary education, and to increase access to post-compulsory education and training especially for under-represented groups.

Teacher/Student/Parent Interaction: supporting shared decision-making between the direct partners in schooling whose commitment is vital to the Program's success.

Teacher Renewal and Support: improving induction into the profession, fostering new approaches to professional development, staff selection, examining alternatives to existing forms of teacher promotion.

School Structure and Organisation: providing for flexibility in the forms of teaching and learning in schools; and supporting new approaches to the use of time in schools which allow for curriculum adaptation and diversification consistent with the needs of all students.

Post-School Links: developing close working relationships between schools, TAFE and other tertiary institutions in order to provide a full range of learning opportunities for all students and to improve access to higher education.

Groups with Specific Needs: taking special measures to meet the needs of groups such as girls, Aborigines, students from non-English speaking backgrounds who have been under-represented in secondary education, and those with learning difficulties.

Public Support for Education: increasing community awareness of, and support for, the value and purposes of secondary education or training for all.

5.3 The Commission envisages these areas as providing a broad agenda for action in secondary education for the remainder of this decade. Some of the reforms proposed will require long-term action. However, the Commission believes that positive action should start in 1984. Examples of both short- and longer-term activities are discussed below. All projects and activities undertaken in the areas listed below should be designed to further the basic objectives of the Program. In particular, it should be possible to evaluate them against two main criteria:

- Will they produce a significant increase in participation?
- Are they contributing to the goal of social equity for members of identified target groups which have been over-represented among early school leavers?

Curriculum

5.4 The Commission sees 1984 as an important year for curriculum planning along the lines outlined in Chapter 3, consistent with the goals of higher participation and equity. A major program of investigation and analysis of issues associated with the nature and form of the secondary curriculum should be commenced as a joint venture between the Commission, the Curriculum Development Centre, State Education Department curriculum branches, and the other bodies in some States with responsibilities in curriculum, assessment and credentialling. It should include consideration of appropriate curriculum models for secondary education systems in the context of contemporary Australian society and culture; of the ways in which the major curriculum agencies in the States might meet the needs of schools in respect of this Program's objectives; and of the implications of devolution of responsibility for curriculum development and adaptation to school and regional level.

5.5 Major projects could be initiated to review whole-school educational programs, especially amongst the priority group of target schools. Projects should, where appropriate, involve local TAFE and tertiary institutions. The initial emphasis in such projects would be on the modification and adaptation of the contents and processes of existing courses of study. Schools and systems might consider supporting undertakings of the following kind:

- Groups of curriculum planners and develop-

ers may be engaged by clusters of schools to work on specifically local community-based curriculum issues.
- Teacher release in appropriate circumstances for planning and developing individual school philosophy on curriculum; planning, developing and evaluating course units in collaboration with students and parents.
- Application and development of successful processes for curriculum change evolved under the Transition Program.
- Development of the idea of a curriculum co-ordinator to operate on a whole school basis; some systems may wish to trial democratic selection processes at the individual school level.

Assessment, Accreditation and Credentialling

5.6 Action should focus on providing students, parents, employers, tertiary institutions and the wider community with broader measures of students' achievements and of successful completion of secondary education than those provided by procedures designed primarily for the purposes of university admission. Tertiary admission procedures developed to expand access by under-represented groups should be applied more widely. The Commission, in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Centre and other agencies, will initiate a national study into the principles and issues involved in assessment and credentialling at the end of secondary education. The study will include the collection of information, the undertaking of research studies, the development of alternative materials and instruments and possible trials of these alternatives. The study may also investigate, through consultations in Australia and overseas, the possibility of devising a system for measuring and reporting achievement throughout secondary education which could be applied by all systems and which might obviate the difficulties and inequities associated both with external examinations and with processes of internal continuous assessment.

5.7 Other action could include:

- Development of models and pilot schemes of flexible tertiary admissions schemes involving an examination of the principles of mature-age entry, the Tertiary Orientation Program in Victoria and their possible wider applications.
- Schools and school clusters could undertake the development of improved assessment procedures which assist students to improve their performance; provide parents and employers with a useful record of student progress and achievement; contribute to effective career planning; and to students' access to diverse forms of higher education.

Teacher/Student/Parent Interaction

5.8 The broad program of improvement envisaged under the Participation and Equity Program requires the close collaboration and informed support of whole school communities. Under the Participation and Equity Program, opportunities should be provided for principals, teachers, parents and administrators to investigate the social and educational reasons for inequitable outcomes of secondary schooling and to plan action to increase participation. In the Commission's opinion such a move is an essential pre-requisite for the development of strategies by which programs more closely attuned to the needs and the backgrounds of all students can be established. Cultural differences, including language differences, must be addressed to encourage broader parent-student-teacher interaction.

5.9 Examples of projects or activities which could be supported by schools or systems are:

- Appointment of specialist personnel to advise on and support more effective student/teacher, parent/teacher and school/community interactions and relations.
- Development of home-school liaison programs, especially to improve schools' understanding of students' backgrounds.
- In-service activities focussing on specific aspects of student/teacher relationships.
- Programs to support participation in representative student and parent organisations, particularly by less advantaged groups.
- Parent counselling and advisory services.
- Development of improved communication with students and parents on school progress and achievement.
- Whole-school appraisals and associated conferences to plan for reform and implementation strategies.
- Development of improved procedures for student counselling and pastoral care.
- Projects which address the need to maintain links between schools and students after they leave, e.g. for early school leavers to be encouraged to return to school full-time or part-time; or for students to work with schools in the light of their experiences after leaving, on such issues as curriculum and credentialling.

Teacher Renewal and Support

5.10 Planning is already underway between the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission

for a review into teacher education provisions in relation to the twin goals of increased participation and equity.

5.11 Major professional development activities should be initiated under the Participation and Equity Program from 1984. These will be separate from activities under the general Professional Development Program. Suggested activities include:

- Whole staff in-service activities related to school evaluation and improvement, curriculum content, school and program objectives.
- The planning and development of a coherent program for whole school professional development and in-service activities related to goals of higher participation and equity, with assistance, where appropriate, from consultants.
- The development of teams of experienced and outstanding practitioners able to work with schools and teachers to initiate more effective teaching approaches. Priority should be given to practitioners from schools in the Program's prime target group, but broader representation and participation is also justified on the grounds that the Program is ultimately aimed at affecting all schools.
- Case studies in the function and operation of the 'mentor' teacher (i.e. one who can play a leadership and training role through the excellence of his or her own practice) in general curriculum and specialist fields.
- Provide in-service opportunities for teachers and teacher aides with particular understanding for groups with special needs, allowing them to develop their skills and so work more effectively with these groups.
- Development of differentiated staffing models which would allow schools greater freedom in acquiring the mix of professional skills needed to implement curriculum for particular school communities.

School Structure and Organisation

5.12 A number of activities might be considered to overcome structural and organisational barriers to curriculum adaptation and improvement and to develop positive student attitudes and teacher morale:

- Approaches to the organisation of junior secondary school studies that are less subject- and more pupil-centred.
- Arranging programs in junior secondary schools that flow naturally from those which pupils have experienced in primary schools with a view to easing the transition from primary to secondary school.
- The creation of sub-schools or other forms of organisation to reduce student alienation.
- The continued introduction of term or semester units as the basic course element.
- Pilot projects involving fully democratic and participatory planning and decision-making processes in secondary schools.
- Major, detailed investigation into alternative approaches to preferment for teachers, including critical analaysis of peer assessment and similar alternative procedures.
- Evaluation, appraisal and reform plans at the individual school level.
- Alternative models to faculty organisational patterns.
- Special provisions for students to upgrade their achievements voluntarily in specific areas of study. Some schools are finding that, after taking Year 11 'alternative' courses, students whose confidence and self-esteem have improved (and perhaps their academic achievement levels also) are seeking to re-enter the mainstream and complete Years 11 and 12. Courses which provide special preparation for Years 11 and 12 could be developed with opportunities for upgrading background knowledge and undertaking some practical activity(ies) of special interest to the student.
- Re-entry provisions should also be encouraged.

The measures listed above are all applicable to the comprehensive high school which the Commission believes has a continuing vital role in secondary education. However, other structures for secondary education can also be effective and are operating successfully in a number of States, such as:

- senior colleges in appropriate localities
- educational networks including schools and TAFE colleges.

5.13 Experimental development of a multi-level, probably multi-campus institution, providing for the last two years of secondary school, and also offering a range of TAFE courses and some foundation level tertiary courses might be considered by systems with an interest in developing learning networks on a relatively formal and permanent basis. An integrated program of this kind could provide for automatic progression from Year 10 to UG3 diploma level. Such an institution could have some of the qualities of an American community college and some of a college of further education on the United Kingdom model.

Post-School Links

5.14 Links between schools and tertiary institutions vary within and among systems. In several States close and co-operative links exist. In

other systems there is minimal co-operation at the local level. Schools need to build links with the wider community; and to track the progress of their students when they leave school.

5.15 Activities which might be undertaken to provide more effectively for all students include:

- As suggested above development of clusters of schools and TAFE institutions might be further fostered and encouraged, with special emphasis on direct links between secondary schools and TAFE colleges with joint courses and shared credentials. Time release may be necessary through the Program for key personnel to plan co-operative arrangements.
- Education systems and authorities might examine closely existing practices under which tertiary institutions admit students directly on the basis of the school's certification or recommendation. This could be accompanied by the institution's involvement in curriculum planning, and so could lead to an arrangement allowing able students to take some university courses while still attending high school. This would assist in broadening access to the whole tertiary sector for groups which have been traditionally under-represented. Non-degree courses and continuing education programs could also be expanded.
- Projects based on closer involvement of business, industry and unions in local educational planning should be developed, as should agreements on broad curriculum objectives and options for secondary schooling in general.
- Projects whereby schools monitor their former students' progress and experience and maintain links with them when they leave school, especially those who leave early.

Groups with Specific Needs

5.16 Activities funded now through the School to Work Transition Program concerned with providing equal opportunities, and consistent with the objectives of the Participation and Equity Program, should continue in 1984 and beyond. Where necessary, these activities should be strengthened and co-ordinated to bring about changes in the way systems and schools operate so as to avoid the situation where equal opportunity activities are accorded low priority, are isolated, or are peripheral to existing school programs.

5.17 Specific measures could be undertaken to strengthen and co-ordinate school and system initiatives in the education of these groups such as:

- Documenting and disseminating successful strategies and preparation of materials to stimulate action by schools and their communities.
- Planning conferences between those working in the area of equal opportunities at school and system level.
- Identification and organisation of resources to support those working in the equal opportunities field.
- Preparation of staff development programs and whole-school in-service activities to plan equal opportunities strategy and school adaptation.
- Teacher replacement to release key personnel to attend meetings, to travel etc.
- Special experts and consultants to assist in school and system planning.

5.18 Other activities could include:

- Curriculum and teacher development to ensure that all aspects of curriculum reflect the experiences and achievements of all groups which make up Australian society.
- Curriculum development to include study of the changing relationships between women and men in regard to legal, political, industrial, domestic and social issues.
- Organisational change to promote and increase the participation of girls in a range of subjects and activities, including mathematics, the sciences, industrial arts, computing and physical education.
- The introduction of community language maintenance courses; and community languages taught as a second language in a functional way.
- Ensuring the participation of non-English speaking parents in decision-making, which may involve provision of interpreters and appointment of liaison officers.
- Curriculum development, in all curriculum areas, to reflect cultural diversity in Australia — including the experience and history of Aboriginal and migrant groups in Australia.
- Development of organisational flexibility to permit an extended time for disabled students to complete courses of study, i.e. enabling them to work at a pace geared to their mental or physical capacity.
- Curriculum development which acknowledges the educational potential of intellectually handicapped children, and makes appropriate provisions for their continuing social and vocational development.

5.19 Non-institutional forms of community-based education will be supported through the Participation and Equity Program for those young people who would otherwise be unlikely to participate in education at all. Funds should continue to be available for community-based organisations working with disadvantaged young people. Since the age of these young people ranges from 15 years to 24 years, the Commission

believes that those in the 15 to 18 year old range should be eligible to receive assistance from the schools sector of the Program. Government and non-government co-ordinating Committees should ensure that community organisations are aware of the funding timetable and are given adequate time and opportunity to prepare submissions for funding:

- Assistance could be provided through the Participation and Equity Program to enable community-based groups to collaborate in developing coherent educational programs which would assist young people to re-enter education or training should they wish to do so.
- Assistance could also be provided through the Program for systems to develop non-institutional programs for target groups, such as young homeless people or young Aborigines in isolated communities, or adolescent refugees requiring intensive assistance to overcome years of disrupted schooling in their countries of origin.
- Community-based programs in the arts and physical education could be developed to enhance the self-esteem of early school leavers, and their capacity for self-expression and enjoyment.
- Examples of productive collaboration between schools, Commonwealth Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) groups and other community education projects should be documented and further supported.

Public Support for Education

5.20 The Commission recognises the importance of a major advocacy and publicity campaign to foster public understanding of the objectives and principles of the Participation and Equity Program. It will be consulting systems and authorities on joint co-operative action at the State, regional and local community levels in 1984. This Program should seek to develop greater community awareness and understanding of secondary education and of the need for higher participation in education based on principles of equity. This campaign will need to be based on an understanding of the attitudes of particular groups, key target audiences being parents and employers. Issues related to curriculum change and to the purposes of credentialling and assessment will need to be communicated for different audiences. In particular, the campaign will need to communicate with young people about the value of completing secondary education.

5.21 Activities could be undertaken at State and local levels to further the aims of the Program by seeking public support for its objectives of higher and more equitable participation in education.

5.22 As the Program develops during 1984 and beyond, the Commission will publish papers providing more information on activities and projects suitable for development.

CHAPTER 6

Operation of the Program

Introduction

6.1 Initially (at least for the 1984-86 triennium) the emphasis within the Program will be on specific efforts to meet the needs of schools serving students who have not been well-served by schooling. However, the Commission considers it essential that general issues in secondary education be taken up from the outset of the Program. Activities at system level and co-operative ventures between schools and other institutions will have central importance. Towards the end of the decade, when significant progress has been made to adapt the mainstream of schooling to the whole age group, a new emphasis and focus may become necessary.

6.2 In 1984, the bulk of Program resources will be directed at schools, or groups of schools and other institutions providing for the Program's priority target groups of students. The remainder will be for authorities to develop programs and services to assist, encourage and facilitate schools' actions and initiatives, and to foster broadly based changes. Details of how this is to be arranged are outlined in 6.12 below.

6.3 Discussion, planning and development will be the main Program activities for 1984. Schools will need to ask themselves how well they are providing, in the contemporary social, psychological and economic context, for young people to continue their schooling until the age of 17 or 18 years. The process must involve the whole school community, since lasting adaptations to provide for the needs of all young people will not occur if only one or two teachers are involved, if the change affects only one faculty, or if the reasons for change are not understood and endorsed by staff, students and parents. It must be recognised also that if adaptations in schools are to be sufficiently comprehensive and are to last, they must be supported by senior staff.

6.4 Adapting to student needs at school level involves interrelated changes to curriculum, organisation, professional development and to relationships within the school. This will require careful development of comprehensive plans to avoid sudden upheavals, or hasty and possibly inadequate innovation. Schools must, therefore, have opportunities to organise teacher, parent and student conferences, to secure release time for individual teachers, to obtain additional contract staff, to enable key personnel to be released for exchange visits, to arrange for visiting consultants, to prepare necessary papers, and to develop networks with neighbouring schools and other educational institutions. All of this will be possible from the allocations for school level activities, although the employment of specialist and other contract staff will need to accord with individual State procedures.

6.5 If change in schools is to be more than superficial and ephemeral, then the relationship between schools and systems is very important. For change to be effective, those in schools must identify closely with it, and must therefore have debated and worked through new approaches and have together reached decisions on the action to be taken. However, system support will be critical if reforms at the school level are to be sustained. Through this Program, the primary role of systems will be to foster and support effective practice in schools by developing guidelines in consultation with relevant groups, providing resources and advice when sought by schools, assisting the establishment of networks between schools, circulating information about effective practice, and developing effective and responsive methods of allocating system resources such as staffing provisions. One important means of accomplishing such objectives will be the development of an appropriate program for the professional development of teachers.

6.6 The coming year will also be used by the Schools Commission for further planning: for developing and refining indices and other statistical measures to enable priority schools to be accurately identified; and for establishing machinery to deal with some of the major concerns requiring a national level approach — credentialling, tertiary admission, the relationship of schools to TAFE, parity of esteem among subjects and community awareness.

Identification of Target Schools

6.7 For 1984 a concentration on target schools will be necessary. A prime criterion for identifying these schools will be the socio-economic circumstances of the populations they serve: the Commission will provide systems with whatever data it can to assist them in this task. However, it expects that authorities will already have other relevant data such as school retention and participation rates and the concentration in particular communities of students from groups on whom the Program is to focus, and that they will also use these in designating schools. The Commission proposes that in submitting program proposals under the Participation and Equity Program for

1984, systems and authorities will provide a list of schools to be involved and the criteria used to identify them. It sees the approach outlined as an important initial step for the Program. In the long term it may be less necessary to target particular schools by these means as disparities in educational outcomes are reduced.

6.8 Information such as that mentioned in the previous paragraph could be especially important to systems in developing the networks of schools and other educational institutions which will be an important element in the development of the Program and which are likely to be introduced on a pilot basis in most systems in 1984. The advantage of such an approach is the opportunity it will provide for co-operative action among schools at all levels, including the sharing and rational use of resources, ideas, expertise and available additional funds. It will also be an effective means of removing some of the barriers that exist between primary and secondary schools, TAFE and tertiary institutions in some States.

6.9 The Commission believes that the target group of schools in 1984 should not exceed about 40 per cent of all secondary schools in the system to ensure the impact of school level allocations is not weakened by too wide a dispersal; system level allocations can, of course, be applied to all schools.

Program Balance: School-System Relationships

6.10 In accordance with the principles outlined above, the Commission suggests that during the first year of operation of the Participation and Equity Program, 1984, programs submitted by State Committees should arise largely from proposals initiated by schools and/or groups of schools. Other proposals will be concerned with the development of support services at system level.

6.11 The Commission recognises the need for flexibility in the division of funds between activities initiated by schools and those of the system. As a guide, State Committees should plan on the basis that, in considering the approval of programs, the Commission will expect approximately 75 per cent of funds to be allocated for proposals from schools or groups of schools. The Commission will give further consideration to this division of funds during 1984, especially in the context of the amounts available for the Program in 1985 and beyond.

6.12 Where projects or activities need system level co-ordination (e.g. credentialling, tertiary admission, curriculum guidelines) or entail major structural changes (e.g. the introduction of new types of institution, experiments with non-standard staffing allocations and patterns), major financial responsibility would rest with the system. On the other hand, any project or activity which has been proposed by a school or group of schools, and whose implementation is administratively feasible at the local level, should be funded from resources allocated to the schools concerned. This could apply even where the system may be the supplier of the personnel and expertise required; 'ownership' and control are most important for successful school based initiatives. However, this would not preclude joint action and funding between schools and systems for some of these initiatives. For example, some projects might involve schools and the system's central administration working co-operatively to research or pilot new approaches in curriculum development or staffing and organisational structure. In such instances, joint funding arrangements could be called for.

6.13 The Commission is aware that schools are frequently asked to respond to changing social circumstances and emerging needs without any real improvement in the resources available to them. It is therefore important that schools have maximum discretion possible as to the use of Participation and Equity Program resources so that the new tasks implied in the Program's objectives will not impose undue stress on the teachers and schools involved. Schools may find it necessary to have Program co-ordinators appointed whose roles could include:

- engaging the whole school community in an investigation of the reasons for early school-leaving
- negotiating with students, staff and parents for appropriate changes in school organisation and curriculum
- organising professional development activities involving staff and parents at school level
- liaison with community groups, employment agencies and other education and training institutions.

It may well be that the most suitable people for these tasks are key members of schools' own staffs. It is essential that schools have access, through this Program, to replacement staff to enable their release from normal duties to be effected.

Funding Arrangements

6.14 It would not be appropriate for the Commission to be prescriptive about the procedures to be used by State Committees for the allocation of funds to target schools under the Participation and Equity Program. It recognises that particular circumstances and constraints may operate in some cases which would make adherence to formal guidelines difficult. However, it

does believe that certain principles should apply from the outset, and these are outlined in the following paragraphs. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, these principles should operate for uncommitted 1984 funds.

6.15 The Commission considers that the Program should not require the development or preparation of detailed, formal submissions from schools as a basis or condition of their participation. Instead, it suggests that all schools identified as falling within the target group should be so advised, and then given the opportunity to plan and develop proposals focussing specifically on the problems and difficulties which led to their inclusion in the Program. Formal documentation will be required but this should be kept to a reasonable level and assistance made available for its preparation in those schools lacking resources or experience.

6.16 School plans and action proposals should be the subject of negotiation and agreement between each school (or group) and the State Committee. Where schools have Transition or Disadvantaged Schools Program Committees these may start the necessary initial planning; where these do not exist, schools should elect representative planning groups. This should be the long-term pattern for all schools.

6.17 As soon as schools have been advised of their entitlement under the Program, the Commission expects State Committees to make arrangements for informing school communities of the objectives and principles of the Program, and to provide assistance through field officers and consultants in the development of proposals. Wherever possible, meetings should be organised on an area basis to assist in the development of school clusters.

6.18 Where groups of schools are co-operating in developing joint plans for action (e.g. teacher development, curriculum planning, flexible staffing, formal links between school and TAFE programs), the proposals for funding should be based on the requirements of the whole project and not necessarily on a school by school basis. Such a group could include a school not on the target list, but able to contribute expertise, special facilities or skills to the group, as well as deriving benefit from participating in it. It could also involve feeder primary schools, perhaps in the development of Years K-12 programs or approaches. The Commission acknowledges that for some systems, using networks of co-operating schools in this way may pose some administrative difficulties. It suggests that for such systems, pilot schemes be introduced in 1984.

6.19 If sufficient resources are to be provided to individual target schools to enable effective reform and renewal action in the major areas of concern in the Program, the Commission suggests the amount proposed for a full high school of 800-1000 students in 1984 could be in the range of $45,000-$55,000, though these figures should not be regarded as absolute limits. It recognises that individual systems may wish to mount special projects in particular areas of disadvantage in which individual school entitlements could be considerably greater. The figures will be reviewed for 1985 and subsequent years in the light of developments and experience in the Program.

6.20 Individual school plans or proposals for reform should be designed to allow schools to engage consultants to provide expert advice. These plans should also provide for the freeing of senior staff and teachers to undertake necessary investigative, planning and counselling work. Emphasis should be given to the use of time to establish links with other schools and institutions. Individual school plans should also reflect the intention of the Program to concentrate on whole school development.

6.21 As indicated earlier, funds used for system level activities will be concentrated on supporting the particular priorities of the system and its schools through the provision of services, and the instigation of initiatives which can only be undertaken at the system level.

6.22 The Commission believes it essential that in planning for the implementation of the Program, Committees should ensure there is maximum long-term flexibility in the use of funds. The Commission does not wish funds made available through this Program to be locked into the fixed recurrent expenditure of government and non-government schools, but to be used for the on-going development of secondary education. When used in this way, the funds available through this Program will represent a significant contribution to the total resources now available for this purpose. The Commission recognises, of course, that sustaining the gains of the Participation and Equity Program will require substantial additional recurring resources for schools. It believes these should come from other Commonwealth and State sources.

The Capital Grants Program: Provision of Secondary Facilities

6.23 The Commission in its ***Report for 1984*** recommended the creation of new earmarked elements within the Capital Grants Program for both government and non-government schools. In 1984, $12.147m (est. June '83 prices) will be made available for the provision of secondary facilities in government schools and $4.048m (est. June '83 prices) in non-government schools.

6.24 As States and non-government school

authorities develop strategies and activities designed to achieve the objectives outlined in this paper, funds available under this element of the Capital Grants Program will be available to complement those plans and to support curriculum changes. It is intended that initially these capital funds will be directed to targeted schools.

6.25 In government schools, projects chosen for support will be those to which State authorities accord high priority. In the non-government sector the Commission will make recommendations to the Minister from applications received. In both cases the Commission expects projects chosen will be those best able to enhance students' general learning environments and increase the prospect of longer and more fruitful secondary education for students. It is likely that projects funded will include those required to widen curriculum options for secondary students at all levels, as well as other projects which are primarily designed to enable students to derive a greater sense of enjoyment and self-esteem from a longer period in secondary school.

6.26 The funds provided under this element are not intended to provide basic facilities to accommodate increased enrolments as retention rates rise. The secondary facilities grants element is seen as providing additional facilities to enhance and enrich the experience a school can offer its students.

6.27 Because the Commission recognises the need for States to have a degree of flexibility in their approach to the provision of facilities to be financed by these grants, it does not wish to be unduly prescriptive about projects to which these funds may be applied, particularly in 1984. It will therefore consult with the States and the Northern Territory regarding ways of achieving some co-ordination between this element of the Capital Grants Program and the Participation and Equity Program.

CHAPTER 7

Administrative Arrangements

7.1 The Government's Funding Guidelines to the Schools Commission indicated the basic administrative arrangements which should apply to the Program. The Commission believes that the effectiveness of the Program will depend, to a large degree, on the administrative arrangements which are followed at both the national and State levels.

7.2 If the Program is to assist in improving the provision of education in Australia, it is essential that careful consideration be given to the procedures which are followed in its administration. In Chapter 3, the Commission outlined the principles which it believes should influence the development of the Program. The Commission has been guided by these principles in drawing up its recommendations for its administration.

Commonwealth Co-ordinating Committee

7.3 The Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs is to exercise a strong co-ordinating role through its chairmanship of a committee involving the two Commonwealth Education Commissions and the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. The Schools Commission believes that this Committee should be established as soon as possible. It should monitor the Participation and Equity Program to ensure that there is consistency in approaches and co-ordination between the two elements of the Program being administered by the two Commissions. General directions, specific Program goals, accountability requirements and, in particular, Program evaluation and the assessment of achievements, should all be overseen by this Co-ordinating Committee.

State Participation and Equity Program Committees

Government Schools

7.4 The Commission believes that the operation of these joint Commonwealth-State Participation and Equity Program Committees is vital to the success of the Program. It believes they should have considerable executive power and be responsible not only for recommending on the administration of the Program but also for planning and detailed monitoring aspects.

7.5 These joint Commonwealth-State Committees should have the following responsibilities:

- To consider guidelines for the Program in the light of local needs and circumstances and to plan Program implementation in accordance with these.
- To engage the necessary personnel, such as field officers and consultants, for the effective development and organisation of the system wide Program.
- To identify target schools.
- To consider ways for system level support to be provided to help effect widespread reform.
- To consult closely with the State English as a Second Language Program and the Disadvantaged Schools Program.
- To consult as necessary with clusters of schools and with relevant interest groups.
- To monitor and evaluate the outcomes of Participation and Equity Program projects and activities in individual schools and clusters of schools.

In addition, the Commission believes it would be appropriate for State Education Departments and non-government authorities to consult Committees in relation to expenditure to be made on the Secondary Facilities element of the Capital Grants Program (as set out in 6.23-6.27).

7.6 given the objectives outlined for the Program by the Government and the agenda for action identified by the Commission, it is essential that the Committees have representation from as broad a range of organisations as possible. Because of the importance the Commission attaches to these Committees, it has set out in some detail below the composition which it sees as appropriate:

Chairperson (State Education Department nominee)
Other State Education Department personnel (3) including representation from the State TAFE sector and a person with experience in the Equal Opportunities area
Commonwealth Schools Commission (1)
Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (1)
Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs (1)
Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (1)
State Labour Department (1)
Parent organisations (2)
Teacher organisations (2)
Students (2)

School principals (1)
Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (1)
Ethnic Communities Council (1)
Organisations with interests in handicapped students (1)

The Commission believes that as far as practicable there should be equal representation of male and female members.

7.7 The Commission will undertake early consultation with government education authorities on the detailed administrative arrangements to be followed in regard to the submission and approval of programs.

Non-Government Schools

7.8 The Participation and Equity Co-ordinating Committees for the non-government sector are to be appointed by the Commonwealth Minister. The Commission believes that these Committees should have a composition based upon similar principles to those underlying the composition of the government school Committees. The differing size and structure of the non-government school sector in the States and Territories will need to be taken into account.

7.9 The Commission believes that these Committees should be serviced in much the same way as was the case for the non-government Transition from School to Work Committees and will enter into negotiations with the appropriate non-government authorities to reach agreement on this issue.

Projects of National Significance

7.10 An amount of $0.52m has been provided for projects which have national significance and which aim at supporting broadly based changes in secondary education. An advisory committee will have responsibility for advising the Commission on projects which should be supported under this element of the Program. The Commission in its ***Report for 1984*** indicated that it saw areas such as the reviewing of credentialling and assessment arrangements, organisational change in schools, improving community attitudes to education and the sharing of information on successful school and system initiatives as being some areas worthy of support.

Schools Commission Participation and Equity Committee

7.11 To assist it in developing the Program for 1984, the Commission will establish a committee drawn from the Commission itself and the Curriculum Development Centre, supplemented by experienced practitioners, administrators and scholars. It envisages a total membership of eight or nine people. This committee will provide the Commission with advice on aspects of the implementation and development of the Program, assist with consultations, and advise on Projects of National Significance.

Recommendations

1. That 1984 be regarded as a developmental year for the Participation and Equity Program. This will involve planning, the funding of pilot projects and investigations; and laying the foundations for the sustained, long-term effort required for the achievement of the Program's goals.
2. That target schools and groups of schools be identified using socio-economic data and relevant information on school retention and educational participation. For 1984, up to 40 per cent of secondary schools in government and non-government sectors in each State may be thus identified.
3. That approximately 75 per cent of the Program funds be allocated to proposals developed by schools; and that the balance be allocated to system level activities affecting all schools and involving other schools in addition to those identified as target schools.
4. That joint Commonwealth-State Participation and Equity Committees for government and non-government schools and TAFE be set up in each State and Territory with broad representation as set out in paragraphs 7.6 and 7.8.
5. That these Committees should have the responsibility for the detailed planning and implementation of the Program in the States and Territories consistent with the objectives, principles and suggestions set out in this report.

Table 3
Participation and Equity Program — Schools Allocations 1984*

State	*Government*	*Non-Government*
	$	$
New South Wales	13,363,000	1,513,000
Victoria	10,399,000	1,508,000
Queensland	6,727,000	723,000
Western Australia	3,829,000	357,000
South Australia	3,715,000	301,000
Tasmania	1,283,000	100,000
Northern Territory	394,000	21,000
Sub-total	39,710,000	4,523,000
Australian Capital Territory	573,000	110,000
National Allocation	501,000	19,000
TOTAL	40,784,000	4,652,000

* (Est. Dec. '83 prices)

Directory

Joint Commonwealth — State Government and non-Government PEP Committees are to be established by 29 February 1984.

These Committees will advise on the development and implementation of PEP projects and programs.

For information on these Committees, State Directors of the Commonwealth Schools Commission may be contacted:

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